W. A. Harlan.

No.....

Robert Todd Lincoln's book entitled Cadet Life at West Point by an Officer of The United States Army with a Descriptive Sketch of West Point by Benson J. Lossing, Boston, 1862. A flyleaf is inscribed "R. T. Lincoln, Harvard College, March, 1862." A bookplate indicates that this publication is from the library of W. A. Harlan.

R. T. Lincoln

Harvard College

March

1862

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WEST POINT MILITARY ACADEMY.

CADET LIFE AT WEST POINT.

BY AN

OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

WITH A

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH OF WEST POINT,

By BENSON J. LOSSING.

BOSTON:
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To

"THE LADIES OF THE REGIMENT,"

THE TOAST OF CAMP AND GARRISON, THESE REMINISCENCES OF CADET LIFE ARE VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

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DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH OF WEST POINT.

BY BENSON J. LOSSING.*

As we passed the foot of Cro' Nest, we caught pleasant glimpses of West Point, and in a few moments the whole outline of the promontory, and the grand ranges of hills around and beyond it, was in full view. We landed in a sheltered cove a little above Camp Town, the station of United States troops and other residents at the Point, and climbed a very steep hill to the Cemetery upon its broad and level summit, more than a hundred feet above the river. It is a shaded, quiet, beautiful retreat, consecrated to the repose of the dead, and having thoughtful visitors at all hours on pleasant days.

"There, side by side, the dark green cedars cluster,
Like sentries watching by that camp of death;
There, like an army's tents, with snow-white lustre,
The grave-stones gleam beneath.

* * * *

"Few are the graves, for here no populous city
Feeds, with its myriad lives, the hungry Fate;

* We are indebted to Messrs. W. A. Virtue & Co., English publishers of Mr. Benson J. Lossing's very interesting Book of the Hudson, for the privilege of reprinting that portion relating to West Point.

soon stood upon the broken walls of Fort Putnam, 500 feet above the river, with a scene before us of unsurpassed interest and beauty, viewed in the soft light of the evening sun. At our feet lay the promontory of West Point, with its Military Academy, the quarters of the officers and the cadets, and other buildings of the institution. To the left lay Constitution Island, from a point of which, where a ruined wall now stands, to the opposite shore of the main, a massive iron chain was laid upon floating timbers by the Americans, at the middle of the old war for independence. Beyond the island arose the smoke of the furnaces and forges, the spires, and the roofs of Cold Spring. Towards the left loomed up the lofty Mount Taurus, vulgarly called Bull Hill, at whose base, in the shadow of a towering wall of rock, and in the midst of grand old trees, nestles Under Cliff, the home of Morris the Warbler, whose songs have delighted thousands in both hemispheres. On the extreme left arose old Cro' Nest; and over its right shoulder lay the rugged range of Break Neck, dipping to the river sufficiently to reveal the beautiful country beyond, on the borders of Newburgh Bay. This is one of the most attractive points of view on the Hudson.

Fort Putnam was erected by the Americans in 1778, for the purpose of defending Fort Clinton, on West Point below, and to more thoroughly secure the river against the passage of hostile fleets. It was built under the direction of Colonel Rufus Putnam, and chiefly by the men of his Massachusetts regiment. It commanded the river above and below the Point, and was almost im-

pregnable, owing to its position. In front, the mountain is quite steep for many yards, and then slopes gently to the plain; while on its western side, a perpendicular wall of rock, fifty feet in height, would have been presented to the enemy. Redoubts were also built upon other eminences in the vicinity. These being chiefly earthworks, have been almost obliterated by the action of storms; and Fort Putnam was speedily disappearing under the hands of industrious neighbors, who were carrying off the stone for building purposes, when the work of demolition was arrested by the government. Its remains, consisting of only broken walls and two or three arched casements, all overgrown with vines and shrubbery, are now carefully preserved. Even the cool spring that bubbles from the rocks in its centre, is kept clear of choking leaves; and we may reasonably hope that the ruins of Port Putnam will remain, an object of interest to the passing traveller, for more than a century to come.

The winding road from the fort to the plain is quite steep much of the way, but is so well wrought that carriages may safely traverse it; and the tourist is led by it to one of the loveliest of river and mountain views northward from the Point, in front of the residences of Mr. Weir, the eminent artist, and other professors employed in the Military Academy. Passing along the shaded walk in front of these mansions, on the margin of a high bank, a white marble obelisk is seen upon a grassy knoll on the left, shooting up from a cluster of dark evergreen trees. It was erected by Major-General Jacob Brown of the United States army, in memory of his youthful

and well-beloved companion-in-arms, Lieutenant-Colonel E. D. Wood, of the Corps of Engineers, who fell while heading a charge, at the sortie of Fort Erie, in Upper Canada, on the 17th of September, 1814. He had been a pupil of the Military Academy at West Point. "He was," says one of the inscriptions, "exemplary as a Christian, and distinguished as a soldier."

Passing a little farther on, a gravelled walk diverges riverward, and leads down to the Siege Battery of six guns, erected by the cadets while in the performance of their practical exercises in engineering. The cannon were housed, and no gunners were near, yet the works appeared formidable. They were composed of gabions, covered with turf, soft and even as fine velvet. The battery commands one of the most pleasing views from the Point, comprising Constitution Island, Mount Taurus, and Break Neck on the right; Cro' Nest and the Storm King on the left; and ten miles of the river, with Polloppel's Island and the shores above Newburgh in the centre. A similar view is obtained from the piazza of Roe's Hotel, on the brow of the hill just above.

A little westward of the Siege Battery are the buildings of the Laboratory of the institution, in which are deposited some interesting relics of the old war for independence. One of the most attractive groups among these relics, is composed of several links of the great iron chain, already mentioned, that spanned the river, enclosing a large brass mortar, taken from the British at Stony Point, by Wayne, and two smaller ones, that were among the spoils of victory at Saratoga. There

are a dozen links of the chain, and two huge clevises. The links are made of iron bars, two and a half inches square. Their average length is a little over two feet, and their weight about 140 pounds each. The chain was stretched across the river at the narrowest place, just above Gee's Point (the extreme rocky end of West Point) and Constitution Island. It was laid across a boom of heavy logs, that floated near together. They were sixteen feet long, and pointed at each end, so as to offer little resistance to the tidal currents. The chain was fastened to these logs by staples, and at each shore by huge blocks of wood and stone. This chain and boom afforded an efficient barrier to the passage of vessels; but their strength was never tested, as the keel of an enemy's ship never ploughed the Hudson after the fleet of Vaughan passed up and down in the autumn of 1777, and performed its destructive mission.

The views from Roe's Hotel, on the extreme northern verge of the summit of the plain of West Point, are very pleasing in almost every direction. The one northward, similar to that from the Siege Battery, is the finest. Westward the eye takes in the Laboratory, Lieutenant-Colonel Wood's Monument, a part of the shaded walk along the northern margin of the plain, and Mount Independence, crowned with the ruins of Fort Putnam. Southward the view comprehends the entire Parade, and glimpses, through the trees, of the Academy, the Chapel, the Mess Hall, and other buildings of the institution, with some of the officers' quarters and professors' residences on the extreme right. The earthworks of Fort Clinton

have recently been restored, in their original form and general proportions, exactly upon their ancient site, and present, with the beautiful trees growing within their green banks, a very pleasant object from every point of view. The old fort was constructed in the spring of 1778, under the direction of the brave Polish soldier, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who was then a colonel in the Continental Army, and chief of the Engineers' corps. The fort, when completed, was 600 yards around, within the walls. The embankments were twenty-one feet at the base, and fourteen feet in height. Barracks and huts sufficient to accommodate six hundred persons were erected within the fort. It stood upon a cliff, on the margin of the plain, 180 feet above the river.

Passing along the verge of the cliff, southward from Kosciuszko's monument, erected by the corps of Cadets, 1828, the visitor soon reaches another memorial stone. It is of white marble, the chief member being a fluted column, entwined by a laurel wreath, held in the beak of an eagle, perched upon its top. The pedestal is of temple form, square, with a row of encircling stars upon its entablature, and a cannon, like a supporting column, at each corner. It was erected to commemorate a battle fought between a detachment of United States troops, under Major Francis L. Dade, and a party of Seminole Indians, in the Everglades of Florida, on the 28th of December, 1835. The detachment consisted of 108 men, all of whom, save three, were massacred by the savages on that occasion. The troops nobly defended themselves, and made no attempt to retreat. Their remains repose

near St. Augustine, in Florida. This monument was erected by the three regiments and the medical staff, from which the detachment were selected.

A few feet from Dade's Command's Monument, a narrow path, through a rocky passage, overhung with boughs and shrubbery, leads down to a pleasant terrace in the steep bank of the river, which is called Kosciuszko's Garden. At the back of the terrace the rock rises perpendicularly, and from its outer edge descends as perpendicularly to the river. This is said to have been Kosciuszko's favorite place of resort for reading and meditation, while he was at West Point. He found a living spring bubbling from the rocks, in the middle of the terrace, and there he constructed a pretty little fountain. Its ruins were discovered in 1802, and repaired. The water now rises into a marble basin. Seats have been provided for visitors, ornamental shrubs have been planted, and the whole place wears an aspect of mingled romance and beauty. A deep circular indentation in the rock back of the fountain was made, tradition affirms, by a cannon-ball sent from a British ship, while the Polish soldier was occupying his accustomed loitering-place reading Vauban, and regaled by the perfume of roses. From this quiet, solitary retreat, a pathway, appropriately called Flirtation Walk, leads up to the plain.

A short distance from Kosciuszko's Garden, upon a higher terrace, is Battery Knox, constructed by the cadets. It commands a fine view of the eastern shore of the Hudson, in the Highlands, and down the river to Anthony's Nose. Near by are seen the Cavalry Stables

and the Cavalry Exercise Hall, belonging to the Military School; and below there is seen the modern West Point Landing. A little higher up, on the plain, are the groups of spacious edifices, used for the purposes of the institution.

The road from the plain to the landing at West Point was cut from the steep rocky bank of the river, at a heavy expense to the government. The wharf is spacious; and there a sentinel is continually posted, with a slate and pencil, to record the names of all persons who arrive and depart. This is for the use of the Superintendent, by which means he is informed daily of the arrival of any persons to whom he might wish to extend personal or professional courtesies.

West Point was indicated by Washington, as early as 1783, as an eligible place for a military academy. In his message to the Congress in 1793, he recommended the establishment of one at West Point. The subject rested until 1802, when the Congress made provision by law for such an institution there. Very little progress was made in the matter until the year 1812, when, by another act of Congress, a corps of engineers and professors were organized, and the school was endowed with the most attractive features of a literary institution, mingled with that of a military character. From that time until the present, the academy has been increasing in importance, as the nursery of army officers and skilful practical engineers.[1]

[1] The buildings of the West Point Military Academy consist of cadets' barracks, cadets' guard-house, academy, mess-hall, hospital of cadets, chapel, observatory, and library, artillery laboratory, hospital

for troops, equipments shed, engineer troops' barracks, post guard-house, dragoons' barracks, artillery barracks, cavalry exercise hall, cavalry stables, powder-magazine, the quarters of the officers and professors of the academy, workshops, commissary of cadets and sutlers' store, shops and cottages for the accommodation of non-commissioned officers and their families, laundresses of the cadets, &c. The principal edifices are built of granite.

The post is under the general command of a superintendent, who bears the rank of brevet-colonel. The average number of cadets is about two hundred and fifty. Candidates for admission are selected by the War Department at Washington City, and they are required to report themselves for examination to the superintendent of the academy between the first and twentieth day of June. None are admitted who are less than sixteen or more than twenty-one years of age, who are less than five feet in height, or who are deformed or otherwise unfit for military duty. Each cadet, on admission, is obliged to subscribe his name to an agreement to serve in the army of the United States four years, in addition to his four years of instruction, unless sooner discharged by competent authority.

The course of instruction consists of infantry tactics and military policy, mathematics, the French language, natural philosophy, drawing, chemistry, and mineralogy, artillery tactics, the science of gunnery and the duties of a military laboratory, engineering and the science of war, geography, history, and ethics, the use of the sword, and cavalry exercise and tactics. The rules and regulations of the academy are very strict and salutary, and the instruction in all departments is thorough and complete.

CADET LIFE AT WEST POINT.

"To our comrades who have fallen one cup before we go,
They poured their life-blood freely out *pro bono publico*,
No marble points the stranger to where they lie below,
They lie, neglected, far away from Benny Haven's O."

PROLEGOMENARY.

INDULGENT READER,—I am not vain enough to suppose that the appearance of my name on the title-page of this work, will create any more of a sensation, than would a prediction that the Union is to be dissolved, or the announcement, in the morning papers, of the death of John Smith. I must, therefore, go through the whole formulary of the Preface. For every new candidate for literary glory seems to imagine his contemporaries, as well as all posterity, seizing him by the throat, and demanding his motives. The truth is, my motives are principally negative. I penned these lines when and because I had nothing else to do.

Soon after leaving West Point, I was stationed in the depths of the western wilderness, with little to do but *wait.* How often, then, my mind went back — it was not, under the circumstances, an unnatural freak — to Alma (?) Mater, and revelled in reminiscences of boyhood! And yet there are some signs of utility even in

jottings like these. It may be, that my inspiration was not wholly of the nature indicated by a verse of that little hymn, our mothers taught us, —

"How doth the little busy bee —" etc.

wherein allusion is made to idleness and the Prince of Darkness.

When I first thought seriously of seeking a cadet appointment, I searched for a long time in vain for the necessary information to guide me in my efforts to obtain it, and to know what were the qualifications requisite for success afterward. Like every other boy in the same circumstances, I wanted to know something of the course of instruction at the Military Academy, and of the general military and social atmosphere within the barrack walls. In short, I sought in nearly every town of my native State, exactly such an account, (however stale it might seem to another,) as I have attempted to write, perfectly willing to pardon any anachronism or microscopic levity that might be detected.

There are a few persons — a very few — who will say that my embarrassment argued a very limited acquaintance with the public institutions and laws of my own country; that a modicum of common sense should teach one to inquire of what is, in a free country, the accessible head of

any department of government, for information of which one stands so greatly in need. Granted: but such persons are those, the circumstances of whose lives have rendered them familiar from childhood with all the details of our military establishment. It is the same story, the world over, of Christopher and the egg, — easy enough to do a thing, when, having the materials, you happen to know how.

I have so far done violence to prefatory propriety, as to say nothing of the militia, about whom military men are so fond of writing. Let me not be misjudged, and let not the charge of lukewarmness be preferred against me here. The body and soul of their organization have been my ancestors; and I will refute this charge by my own and their history, from the day of Lexington to the day of Harper's Ferry. I am silent, only because I cannot do justice to the subject.

And now for the single circumstance under which I shall not have written in vain: if anything here shall be the means of averting the mortification and disappointment of one future cadet, the bark of whose hopes might have stranded in shoals otherwise unseen.

About three fifths of those who have entered the Military Academy have never won a commission. I may be able to show, at least by

implication, the causes of these failures. If so,— though I do but repeat what has been said a thousand times before, — some interested youth will complacently declare that I have even done the State some service.

P. S. — I regret that, unlike other authors, I cannot await the decision of the public, being under orders to join my regiment.

R. R.

Komanchykastle, 1859.

CADET LIFE AT WEST POINT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It is the evening of the 15th June, 1857, that my friends and I have climbed this steep ascent, and are looking down into the very stronghold of romance, chivalry, and song. The sun is just blazing in the forest on the heights behind us. Below and eastward, the shadow of this sacred pile has enveloped the plateau, and, descending thence, has stopped abruptly on the confines of Orange, as though some old military order of the day had forbade its going farther.

Availing myself of a short season of recreation to visit my friends in the North, I have thus far ascended this noble Hudson, almost every foot of whose majestic course the historian of "Sunnyside" has made familiar, as the scene of some important event of the Revolution. Unable now, as ever, to pass unheeded my earliest military home, — a spot hallowed by the struggles of an

infant nation, and made by Nature's hand and the decrees of government the centre of our military power, — I have lingered, for a day, to pay to its greatness my humble tribute of respect.

I rest this evening, for the first time since the day when, a youth of twenty-two years, I did

> "Doff the cadet and don the brevet,
> And change the gray for the blue,"

upon the crumbling walls of this old Revolutionary fort, falling more and more rapidly to decay. Each fragment of stone, as, loosened from its bed by the elements, and receiving perhaps an impulse from the vandal foot of some idle visitor, it successively rolls away southward, down the rocky glen, seems to mark another stride in time's progress, as it refers to a more remote period of the past, those times that tried men's souls, when a nation's liberties had need of its mute protection.

Though I am not alone, yet, for many minutes, all is as silent about me as though I were unattended. My half dozen companions, who have now, all for the first time, climbed these heights, are looking down in speechless rapture. It is true, they see not here the terrible sublimity of the Alpine avalanche, the mighty cataract, or

flaming Vesuvius, but a scene, than which, on this lovely summer evening, the world has few more lovely. Here, too, the mind's eye reads the dark tale of 1780, at whose mention a nation's heart stood still, and then poured out its thanksgivings to the God of battles, for the impending stroke had been averted.

My own revery carries me back to a period less remote. I read in silence from the tablet of memory — made brighter and brighter as I longer look — the history of those four successive years when I, youthful and ardent, sat here and thought of those old tales. Years ago, when the duties of the academic week were done, or when, in summer, for a few hours freed from the discipline of our little camp, I mounted to this very spot, a favorite haunt, and dreamt my boyish day-dreams. How familiar now appears each feature of the face of this lovely nature, — hill, valley, rock, and river. They have changed not, while I've grown old.

And who knows but those selfsame waters, that now, far below us, are glistening in the last rays of the setting sun, flowed there as well, when, as a cadet, I first looked from this seat down upon that peerless river. Perhaps they, wearied of the roar and turmoil of Ocean, have oft flown in vapor northward, to fall refreshing and re-

freshed, and run again this merry race among their native hills. Thus the cadet, in riper years, returns from stormy life, and wishes he were a boy again.

How inseparably interwoven in its history is some great natural feature of every country. In ours, how true of the Hudson and its highlands, this great link in the chain that, of old, connected on the one side the heights of Bunker Hill, with Yorktown and the Carolinas on the other. Would we seek the mystic poetry of ages long gone by? What a tale of the red man's tradition is in the murmur of these waters. Do we look, as on the banks of the Rhine and the Tiber, for the decaying and decayed monuments of feudal power and ancient empire? The story of a nation's birth is written in the heart of every true American, imperishable as these old hills that watched here the strife and clapped their hands at the consummation.

And now my thoughts go back but a single hour, and I listen again to the prophetic words of the orator of to-day. This very evening, when the names of another graduating class had been enrolled among those he called the champions of an undivided nationality, he told them, in language of burning eloquence and prophetic strength, the tale of our present danger — of

Disunion's Reign of Terror. We heard again those words of mighty import which, in times like these, are on every patriotic and paternal lip: —

"Can ye divide that record bright and tear the names apart,
That erst were written boldly there with plight of hand and heart?
Can ye erase a Hancock's name e'en with the sabre's edge,
Or blot out with fraternal blood a Carroll's double pledge?
Say, can the South sell out her share in Bunker's hoary height,
Or can the North give up her claim to Yorktown's closing fight?
Can ye divide with equal hand a heritage of graves,
Or rend in twain the starry flag that o'er them proudly waves?
Can ye cast lots for Vernon's soil, or chaffer 'mid the gloom
That hangs its solemn folds about your common father's tomb?
Or can ye meet around his grave as fratricidal foes,
And wake your burning curses o'er his pure and calm repose?
Ye dare not, is the ALLEGHANIES' thunder-toned decree,
'Tis echoed where NEVADA guards the pure and tranquil sea,
Where tropic waves delighted clasp the Southron's flowery shore,
And where, through frowning mountain-gates, NEBRASKA'S waters roar."

The still small voice of each mountain and historic hill around me, echoes back "Ye dare not."

There is a spot to the southward of the wild

Saskatchawan, where the American traveller, who wanders beyond the farthest sources of the Missouri, may learn, even from a drop of water, a great political lesson. On the highest ridge of a little eminence, he watches the tiny rain-drop, and reads, as it falls here or there, its various destiny. In the one case, it goes to swell the iceberg that crushes the heroic mariner in polar seas. In the other, blown it may be by a gentle breeze a hand-breadth southward, and falling upon the crest of the other slope, it threads its unerring course to the southern gulf, and straightway floats the commerce of the tropics. The uncompromising Compromise of to-day is America's future glory. Let us cling to the palladium of Union, as the shipwrecked mariner to his plank, in darkness and the storm.

My thoughts turn again from beyond the sphere of one whose duty is to *obey* back to reminiscences of Alma Mater; and I point out to my companions the scenes of the soldier-boy's arduous duty or pleasant recreation. As we look down upon the barrack and the academy, beneath our feet, I almost think I am again a student, roused by the stirring *reveillé* to the morning task, or sentinel, marking with steady step each moment of the long night-watches.

But where now are those who strove together,

in generous emulation, for academic honors? Where are those on whose right hand or on whose left I stood in the morning drill, and in the evening parade; — those gray forms, that every moss-grown rock and cooling shade then knew so well?

Down in that romantic and sequestered spot, sheltered by hoary Cro-Nest from the blasts of winter, sleeps one o'er whose head his classmates have written his short and mournful story, and their last adieu. Some there were who now are "sleeping well" on the fields of *Resaca*, *Monterey*, and the *Molino*. Away in the depths of western wilds, beyond the beaten track of the white man, fell another gallant form, — the victim of exile and of the social enemy more treacherous than the Dacotah.

Here is the signet-ring, worn by each classmate when parting, with which we wed our future and various history, each an effort in a common cause.

* * * * * * * * *

We mused till the shades of twilight had dimmed all but the page of memory. Those strains of martial music which, rising from the plain below, had lent a new charm to the little war pageant my fellow-travellers had watched with delight, had long since ceased. Casting

then a final lingering look, above, around, beneath, at the faint outline of "the Grange" beyond the river, at "André's dungeon," and this mouldering ruin, we followed the winding path that led us slowly down and away from old Fort Putnam.

CHAPTER II.

MY FATHER SMELLS GUNPOWDER.

"The morn
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

"THEE'RT a sorry lad, and thee'll make but a weak staff for the support of thy old father in time to come." My father is dead, and I know no more than you why he always did thus "thee" and "thou" my sister and me. The truth is, I never asked him, though he lived for more than sixty years. Forsooth must it be confessed that, till to-night, the question never entered my head. I should rather have sought the reason why, had he ever spoken otherwise than with these accustomed expressions of a kind parent's endearment.

It was the 8th of May, 18—, and this *reveillé* was a late one. The sun had long been shining brightly in at the open window, and the ploughmen, whose voices, as they harnessed their teams, had first woke me, were now gone to their labor; and I was yet in bed.

My father was an early riser, and had tried to teach me, in former years, the necessity for my being so, if I aspired to being in any degree a "forehanded" man. When a child, I had often on his knee recited sage poetic maxims, all about the advantage of seeing the morning sun before the morning sun saw me. But, poetry aside, my father had always been an admirer of King Solomon's code of domestic law. When, therefore, I had attained the age of twelve years or thereabouts, and could perform some of the dairy and other duties as well as older heads, I rose early; not because I was remarkably sensitive to the point of a moral, or extremely covetous of an excess of this world's goods, but because there was, in the tone with which Rankanfile *père* each morning called my name, — especially if he had to call twice, — something that seemed to warrant a curtailment of my slumbers. But on this occasion there was no rebuke, except affection's contraries, the secret being that I was now a guest. I had returned on the previous day, to spend a fortnight's vacation, from the seminary where I was "fitting for college;" a project considered, in our neighborhood, of no less importance than undermining a throne, or —— writing a book. I might almost say that I was "home for the holidays" — just as, from a

thousand precedents, my hero would be, were I to write a novel — and I was therefore to be indulged.

But my father was on business now. He was going that morning to L——, and wanted to speak to me in the Round Room before he left. This announcement, having been made without the usual inquiry after my health, excited my curiosity. I foresaw a mighty something about to burst on me or mine, and was not long in rejoining him in the apartment he had named. Indeed I had hardly stopped to admire the bunch of violets I had but just now discovered on my pillow. — My dear mother and sister had crept softly to my bedside an hour before, and the latter had placed them beside the head of her lazy, unappreciative brother.

I found my father usurping a portion of my grandfather's great arm-chair, whose spacious and oracular depths had, in the days of my childhood, afforded room for the frolics of half a dozen cousins at once. He appeared much more deeply agitated than the sequel would seem to warrant. But, had he now deliberately declared that the war of '12 was an American mistake, I should not have felt greater surprise than when his circumlocution led me to infer that he wished me, if possible, to go to West Point, and

become a soldier. He had never before mentioned the subject since I was born, if ever. A little occurrence of the previous week had, unaccountably, fixed his determination to do so now on the first opportunity. This event was nothing more nor less than the arrival, at our house, of a young officer and a sergeant, in pursuit of a deserter from a fort on the Canada frontier. The officer accepted, for a few hours, the hospitality of my parents, and it seemed as if he were on the deserter's track, for a man, answering the description given, had rather mysteriously disappeared from among my father's workmen, where he had been but a few days. Whether he was ever caught or not is at present immaterial; though both you and I would rather like to know. Indeed, I had an aunt — unmarried at last accounts — who I really believe would have stopped short here in the perusal of this interesting and eventful history, and would never have read another page till she had learned the whole history of that remarkable case.

My father told me that the fact of my being an only son had always deterred him from speaking of a separation that he had always thought would be beneficial to me. He said, moreover, that another and almost insuperable obstacle

would be found in my mother's tenderness, that would hardly permit her to consent that her son should assume the hazards of an army life. He watched, anxiously, the effect of his remarks upon me, and seemed highly gratified by the reply that my countenance indicated, before I essayed to speak. If his confidence in my inclination to abide by his wishes, in this respect, had needed any additional strength, it certainly had no such need after this half hour's conversation. He had struck the very chord in my temperament that could vibrate in perfect unison with his decision. Still, I had no idea of what I was talking about; that is, I knew not a single law relative to the Military Academy. I only knew that a certain number of young men were there trained for military duty, under the direction of the general government; that they were appointed by some high authority at Washington; that they were supposed, by all our neighbors at least, to graduate there with unlimited mathematical and physical attainments; and — as the effect, probably, of eating raw beef, and drinking each day a ration of rum and gunpowder, stirred with a ramrod — to hold the little matter of human life in the most supreme contempt. Whatever was extravagant in my impressions of West Point had never been controverted, and never would

have been, by any one about me. I do not even know where I could ever have learned what little I did know on the subject. It proved now, however, as I rejoiced to learn, that my father had a faint notion of the manner in which the apportionment of cadet appointments was made; but the steps necessary to be taken, or the time when, were alike unknown to us both. The result of the discussion was, that I was to think over, during the day, the subject of a military education, and to see if deliberate reflection would seem to confirm my preferences as this morning expressed; while he was to seek at L—— sufficient information on the subject to enable us to hold a more fruitful conference in the evening.

I had never fully appreciated my military propensities until this morning. It afterward appeared that my father had often watched the interest with which I listened to my grandfather's accounts of the old Indian wars and tales of '76. He has not failed, since then, to remind me often of the company of a dozen barefooted dragoons I had mustered when but ten years of age; each with a cock's spur tied to his left heel, our war steeds the little Canadian ponies of our fathers, and Chanticleer's brilliant plumage waving over our majestic brows. What a nation of giants,

in these latter days, could our parents but write our biographies! Now that the thought had possessed me that I, born and bred the son of a farmer, without political or pecuniary influence, might obtain a cadet warrant, my enthusiasm knew no limit. So unimportant an item of to-day's duties as breakfast, did not occur to my mind until suggested by my dear mother. I ransacked, this very day, the ponderous files of weekly newspapers so carefully packed away, and so old that it seemed as if they groaned with the weight of rusty years as I turned them over. All the books of the old library came forth from their hiding-places, to submit their tables of contents to an inspection, the object of which was to find out the law regulating the cadet appointments, the system of instruction at West Point, and the present organization of the army.

But my disappointment was only increased when my father returned without having been able to procure any important information. He had, however, consulted the leading lawyer of the town; and the interview had resulted in the following brilliant exposition:

"The tract of public land known as West Point, and situate on the principal river of the State of New York, was ceded to the general

government some years since by that State, for the purpose of establishing there a military school.

"The only persons, however, who receive the benefits of that institution are the eldest sons of the President of the United States, of members of the Cabinet and of Congress, of ambassadors at foreign courts, and of distinguished officers of the army killed in service." He added that these unfortunate aristocratic features of oligarchy and primogeniture were soon to be the subject of a memorial to Congress from his own hand.

The learned man, having received his consultation fee of four dollars, two of which, he stated, were due for that portion of "advice" relating to the cession of the territory by the State of New York, and the rest for that relative to the military laws of the United States, he said that, as Mr. Rankanfile had spoken of his son in connection with the army, he would undertake, if desired, to procure my enlistment as a private soldier. He had understood that the chances of promotion, where it was merited, were good in our army; he would perform the service for a nominal consideration; and he flattered himself that the political influence he could exert was not inconsiderable. I dare say it was not; in fact, I should think it very strange were it otherwise.

My father, nevertheless, for reasons that he never explained to me, declined the proffered service, flattering as it might seem. It was only a few days after this that, by diligent inquiry, we had learned there was an officer on topographical duty at only a few miles distance, and we resolved to seek information of him by the post. Our letter was answered, next day, as follows: —

"Sir, — Your Congressional District — as also every other in the United States, each Territorial District, and the District of Columbia — is entitled to one representative, as such, and only one, at the same time, at the Military Academy. Your Congressman can inform you as to whether there is, at present, a vacancy. If there is, it will be immediately filled, on application to the War Department, through him. Such further information as is required, you can obtain by addressing a letter to the Adjutant-General of the Army, at Washington, who will send you the Circular of the Secretary of War, relating to this subject."

"Hurrah!" thought I, without waiting to read the rest of the letter, "I've got the whole war establishment at the end of a string at last." And I resolved to pull that string with a jerk.

But the remainder of the letter, if not the most interesting, was certainly the most curious part of the whole communication. It ran thus :—

"I am, Sir,
Very Respectfully,
Your Ob't and Humble Serv't,

———— — ————,
Lieut' Corps Top' Eng'
U. S. Army,
In charge —— —— Survey."

"To Moses Rankanfile, Esq.,
Rankanfile Four-Corners."

I have paid that officer eight or ten years of heartfelt gratitude for this kindness, and the obligation is not discharged yet; but I could not avoid laughing at that peroration. Its formula was not so familiar to me then as it has since become. What a blessing to our humiliated nature, and to the economy of the quartermaster-general's department that furnishes the stationery and pays the postage, would some one but construct the model of a short official letter that didn't look like a great black spider. I can easily comprehend why I should take off my hat to my commanding officer, laugh when he laughs, admire his solution of an administrative problem when I know he is all wrong, accept his com-

mand to dinner and the chilly atmosphere exhaled all round the table from himself to madam and the young ladies with the "greatest pleasure," when I feel that I would rather sit, for a day's march, in the vise of the travelling forge. But why, when I wish to say, "I'm here, and ready for duty, sir," must I blow a prefatory blast of four or five lines, and wind up, with a grand flourish of trumpets, in half a dozen more? The genius of the poet in one swoop strikes my insubordination to earth —

"Whatever is, is right."

The poet referred doubtless to military life.

I lost no time in procuring that circular from Washington. A distant relative, residing near Newburgh, N. Y., supplied me at last with other intelligence; and from many different sources, I was gradually collecting sufficient information to enable me, as the critic says, to get ready to set about commencing to begin. The circular-letter of the Secretary of War said that the candidate for a cadet warrant must be over sixteen and under twenty-one years of age, and an actual resident of the State and District from which he is appointed. He must be, at least, five feet in height, and free from every disease or deformity which might, in any manner, interfere with the discharge

of the various and arduous duties of an army officer. After receiving his credentials, he must present himself at West Point, between the first and the twentieth day of June, to pass an examination in reading, writing, and spelling, and, of arithmetic, the four ground rules: reduction, vulgar and decimal fractions, and compound and simple proportion.

There are many other things to be said, relating to this interesting subject, all of which will be duly developed in the subsequent pages.

CHAPTER III.

AN ELEMENTARY EXERCISE IN WIRE-PULLING.

"Fair is foul and foul is fair."

The next question to be considered was the manner in which I should approach our representative to Congress. The political atmosphere of Rankanfile Four-Corners was decidedly Democratic, while the honorable M. C. had been elected by the Opposition. My case might then be considered almost a hopeless one.

I had been told that he must naturally feel bound to reward, to the extent of his patronage, those who had placed him in office; and that, unless I could bring to bear on the War Department some influence more powerful than his, there would be little utility in any effort I could make. But I immediately resolved to make the attempt, and in my own way; for the less said about the political opinions of my relatives and friends the better. I was now sixteen years old, and there must certainly be at least *one* vacancy

before I should have passed the prescribed age. A little more than one year had been passed at the academy where I was now studying, and a regard for the wishes of my dear mother had, perhaps, more than any other incentive, kept me steady and studious. This conduct had secured the approval and confidence of the principal and the other instructors, the former of whom was a man quite extensively known in that part of the State, and likely to command, indirectly, a considerable amount of influence. I immediately called upon that gentleman, and stated my wishes; whereupon he promptly volunteered to aid me to the extent of his ability. Although not himself a very active politician, he had many friends who were such, and was, moreover, an acquaintance of Mr. G., our member elect, to whom he gave me a very complimentary letter. Armed with this and some other weapons of diplomatic warfare, I visited Mr. G., and, in a very awkward manner, made known my errand and presented the letters. He had not yet taken his seat in Congress, and he frankly acknowledged that although he knew the recommendation to the War Department for such an appointment was an important part of the patronage of his office, he as yet knew little of the law regarding this subject. I therefore explained, much to

his apparent satisfaction, all I had learned about it; and gaining confidence as I proceeded, told him in substance that I was, as it appeared, the first who had made application to him, and that it was fair to infer therefrom that I was the most anxious and enthusiastic of all the candidates who would present themselves. I told him plainly that I had been taught to believe considerations of party would overrule any merits I might possess, and that my successful rival would be one whose father had procured him the greatest number of votes. He answered this by a peculiar grin, that mighty weapon in the hands of a skilful executioner, wherewith he punishes your impertinence over the shoulders of your unoffending tailor, as it seems to say that your physical development is far beyond the capacity of your waistcoat. But he finally assured me, and good-naturedly, that he fully appreciated my claims, that he would give every applicant's merits a careful attention, and would nominate to the Secretary of War the person who, in his candid opinion, would be most likely, as a cadet at the Military Academy, to prove an honor to the country, to himself, and to him who had nominated him. While he was growing thus eloquent on the subject of his own integrity, I have not the slightest doubt he was confident

of his ability to keep his promise. He knew that—

"A wit's a feather and a chief's a rod,"

but he had not yet learned the rest—

"An honest *politician* 's the noblest work of God."

I knew I had been somewhat saucy, but I was sure I had accomplished all that could have been reasonably expected. He was unable to inform me whether there was then a vacancy; but promised to consult his predecessor in regard to it, and inform me by letter. Accordingly, in about a week thereafter, I received a polite note from him, stating that there was at present a young man at West Point from our district, and the probability was that he would graduate; as he stood near the head of his class, in scholarship and military deportment. We shall, as we progress, be likely to hear that young gentleman's account of himself, in his own words.

Time continued to roll on, with very little apparent regard to my military projects, and January, 18—, had at length arrived. The cadet appointments for that year would be made and published within a few weeks at farthest, when to my unspeakable chagrin, I learned that Mr. G. had sacrificed me, at the last moment. He had yielded to the solicitations of friends who, in

reply to his declaration that he should send in my name in preference to all others, had assured him that, if he did so, his official existence would certainly and abruptly terminate at the next election. This, then, was the result of my night-watches and day-dreams, the total overthrow, as it for a time seemed, of all my hopes; so completely had my whole being been absorbed in this one idea. During the long period that I had been awaiting the result, I had read everything I could lay hands upon that in anywise related to that spot among the hills of the Hudson, whose legends surpass romance. I had procured sketches that taught me something of the beauty, not to say sublimity, of the scenery among which the plain of West Point is nestled. I had learned many of the police regulations of the barracks, and, in conformity thereto, had taught the furniture of my chamber the rudiments of a military education, by arranging it morning and evening for "inspection." While looking over those sketches of the scenery, I had often, in imagination, gone to the summit of the neighboring heights to look upon that beautiful plain enlivened by the drill and dress-parade, and upon those gray old piles where I was to win my diploma and my commission.

There was yet one desperate effort to be made,

and I resolved to make it; nothing could be lost, everything might be gained. Within twenty-four hours after the above-mentioned intelligence arrived from Washington, I passed, for the first time in my life, the limits of my native State, and was on my way to that city.

Unknowing and unknown I presented myself at the White House, sustained by the mad determination to make such an attempt that I might not, in after-years, reproach myself with having "struck" without a blow. I was so fortunate as to gain, with little difficulty, an audience of the President; but I will not attempt to describe the manner in which I opened and pleaded my cause, for I know neither the extent to which I violated diplomatic etiquette, nor the language employed, but merely remember telling him how anxious I was to go to West Point; that my ancestors had faithfully served their country, musket in hand, during all the wars in which we had ever been engaged; that, because my father was a farmer, and a supporter of his administration, I was to be deprived of an appointment I had already gained and lost; that a word from his Excellency would make me perfectly happy, while I had reason to believe it would not make my rival altogether miserable; and, finally, that should he be pleased to cause

the recommendation of Mr. G. to be overruled, and the appointment given to me, I would do my duty at the Military Academy, and never prove unworthy of the confidence reposed in me.

The President was by no means demonstrative on this occasion; — indeed, while I was speaking, he appeared very much as his marble statue would have done under the same circumstances; but when I left the audience chamber, my confidence in a successful issue was so great that I would hardly have thanked one to insure it. I only wished now that I had been penniless, and had been compelled to come to Washington and return on foot, as one or two boys, younger than myself, had been known to do under similar circumstances. But unfortunately I was compelled to defer being a hero.

If I had been heard with a favoring ear, I knew that, although I had been more than earnest, it was to my father's advice more than to any merit of my own, that this success was due. He had warned me before leaving home to observe now and always the old maxim: "That it were better to tell but half the story than to say one word too much." Accordingly, I occupied so little time in this patriotic, political, personal, and perplexing address, that I am sure I observed, in the President's face, a look of surprise as I abruptly left him.

Four weeks after my return home, a huge package, stamped "Adjutant-General's Office, Official Business," and bearing the seal of the United States, was put into my hands at the post-office. If you have ever gone mad in the pursuit of some darling scheme, whether trivial or of great moment, in which you lived, moved, and had your entire being, you will comprehend why, as I strode home with this stupendous prize, the shoemaker, the minister, the "dry-goods and groceries" man, and then all the farmers' wives, looked out and wondered if Dick Rankanfile had really lost his wits.

If you have reached or passed the meridian of life, you will say that I was too old to be thus a child. But it comes with but a bad grace from your lips, and I'll tell you why. When you lay down this journal, and forget me to commune with your own thoughts, you'll mount again the hobby of your own life — you know its name, 'tis something — and drive the jaded beast till it is ready to sink. Stop then, and ask yourself if, even in so-called manhood, things are what they seem. When younger hearts are rocking the cradle of your second childhood, will you tell them in just which march of Life's campaign you met the traitor Folly and the day was yours? Tell them, rather, at each step from the inno-

cence of lisping infancy to the ripeness of whispering age, to look around and within and —

> "Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
> Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw."

But this is not the way to tickle the reader. I have wandered a long way from West Point, and from Rankanfile Four-Corners, and the big letter is still unopened. Nor is this the first time I've forgotten to open it. The thought of breaking the seal never occurred to me till long after I had reached home and imparted the intelligence — all there was on the outside — and the excitement, to mother, sister, and father.

My poor mother! I have not told of the contending emotions of two long years in that fond heart. How she did try to think as her boy thought and wish as he wished. And perhaps there was some pleasure mingled in the pain with which she had watched the possibilities of my success: — pleasure, from the thought that her son would be happier in the path of his own choice. But she thought of the ten thousand temptations and dangers that beset the way of the soldier, and the long years of separation an army commission would entail. My sister felt little less keenly the inevitable separation, but "Dickie's" success was the pride of that heart

which the shadow of selfishness never darkened, so she only wept and was glad.

The awful missive was opened in the presence of the whole family — spaniel and the two "hired girls" inclusive — with such excessive care that there was neither an unnecessary rent in that formidable envelope nor a crack in the wax of the monstrous seal. We learned, within, that the President had been "pleased" (I supposed he had used that expression to spite Mr. G.) to confer, etc., etc., and it was signed by the Secretary of War. I was therein instructed to reply by letter, immediately, stating my acceptance or non-acceptance (how much out of place this word seemed to me then) of this conditional appointment. I was also to enclose the written permission of parent or guardian to sign those articles, by which I should bind myself to serve the United States for eight years unless sooner discharged. I was, besides, very kindly advised not to accept unless confident of possessing a taste for mathematical studies, with a determination and physical ability to endure the severity of military discipline. A list of little things, known at West Point as "the articles marked thus," was given, which I was to bring from home. And then, (what a fall from my dream of military glory where filthy lucre was too mean

to have a place,) I must, if I was able, carry with me to West Point, the sum of sixty dollars and ninety-five cents, to be deposited in the hands of the treasurer of the Military Academy. And, indeed, there were, in this remarkable communication, many other equally curious and important details which will be gradually and faithfully developed, if we should live till the next chapter of this impartial history.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE TRACES AT LAST.

"O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience."

I HAVE never had an interview with the Honorable Mr. G. since my first visit to the city of Washington. One reason is, that I never have happened to have since then any business on my hands that seemed to need his participation, and, moreover, were I to meet him, I fear I couldn't refrain from speaking of my juvenile diplomacy; and that might be to him an unpleasant subject of discussion. I have no reason to suppose, however, that he ever knew exactly how I had circumvented him. But there came a rumor that he indulged, when he heard of my success and his defeat, in a long paragraph of incoherent, yet forcible, fluent, and musical declamation, that, had it not come from Patrician lips, might have been deemed inelegant, not to say vulgar. The poor man deserved a better fate for his first honest intentions. He was deemed by the influential

father of my most formidable rival, a traitor to his party. This man planned the overthrow of Mr. G. and pulled the fatal "wire;" down came the axe of political retribution, and the Official's head rolled in the dust of obscurity.

When my gentle mother intimated that she thought I had, perhaps, been rather selfish in the extraordinary measures I had taken to secure my own appointment, I smiled at the want of discernment that would attempt the application of the Golden Rule to a matter of politics. How eloquently I applied it to particular cases, and showed its absurdity! But still my dear mother was incredulous, and thus the matter ended and was forgotten in busy preparations for my departure.

The time that intervened between the date of my appointment and the time for leaving home in June, was occupied as it always is in such cases. There was more preparatory bustle than might have sufficed to open a campaign.

"Wal, Richard," said a neighbor one day, an old man, "so you're a-goin' to Wes' P'int, be ye? Hear me, for I've seen a gredil more o' this vale o' tears than what you hev. Jest on'y du yer duty, as Gin'ral Washin'ton did. Allus fear God *fust;* then obey them as is put over ye, and be kind to them that's beneath ye. I hope yer

teachers there are pious men and 'll try to bring ye up in the nurtur; but I'm afraid, Richard, my boy, I'm afraid — I'm afraid the place where you're a-goin' is a bad place, the very wust place you could go tu git relidgi'n."

The afternoon of the twelfth of June found me on the upper deck of a Hudson River steamboat, straining my eyes to catch a glimpse of the flag at West Point, which the man at the wheel was trying to point out. I landed at the government wharf, a few minutes after sunset, and putting my baggage in charge of Rider's plenipotentiaries, — the rascals acted as if they knew I was a "plebe," — I jumped from the omnibus, too slow for me just now, and ran up the steep ascent. As I passed the pyrotechnic laboratory that I thought was a prison, I heard the sound of martial music; and when I came upon the plain, my delight in the magnificence of the view suddenly presented to my sight can be imagined only by him who, unaccustomed to military displays, sees for the first time, in the forepart of June, the dress parade of the United States Corps of Cadets. The place, the season, the fragrant breath of evening, the enlivening presence of hundreds of eager spectators, the stirring music, — and then the dead silence, broken at length by the voice of the officer in charge, as by seeming

magic he put in motion the gray clockwork of the manual of arms, made up a scene of such enchantment as I never before, nor since, have witnessed. Motionless I looked, till the solid ranks had been broken at the barrack that reared its massive walls on the south side of the plateau. The spectators had dispersed and there stood your most humble servant, alone, by the flagstaff, on the crest of the northern slope, pensive and sad, wishing for — I know not what except it were a friend. Oh, no, I wasn't homesick — not at all. This would have betrayed a weakness to the last degree unmilitary. It would seem, moreover, to imply that I didn't feel proud to stand there as I did, with my credentials in my pocket, albeit the gay visitor and the old cadet would say that I was nothing but a plebe. Not homesick; for I felt that the eye not only of Rankan-file Four-Corners but of the whole State was upon me. I roused myself, and it was one of the proudest moments of my life. I had a habit then of soliloquizing in an audible tone, and of gesticulating vehemently at the same time. It will, perhaps, be not entirely foreign to my subject, to remark that I was effectually cured of this habit within a few months, or, rather, weeks, from this time, after having been repeatedly reported for "muttering audibly and raising hand

in ranks." Accordingly I took this occasion for holding a short interview with my military friend, whom I now considered no less a personage than Cadet Rankanfile. I, however, without intending any disrespect to his official position, addressed him as familiarly as ever. I assured him that I could not perceive the necessity of being afraid of anything, inasmuch as his Uncle Sam owned all the property here, and even the well-earned dollars of his father assisted to buy this old liberty-pole he was now leaning against. I finished by remarking that as he had his Columbic Excellency's ticket in his pocket, and a disposition to hold his head well up, he ought to feel no hesitation in grappling with the preliminaries of his new position.

This conference being, for the present, closed, I threw out my chin to an elevation of about forty-five degrees, kicked the ground, first with one foot, then with the other, and struck out with my clinched fists right and left, in order to establish in my own breast a feeling of perfect independence. But it must be confessed that this demonstration seemed to have *established* in the *breast* of a dragoon soldier, who happened at that moment to be passing along Chain-Battery Walk just behind me, the opinion that I was a lunatic. He smiled and threw out some remark

indicative of his conviction, whereupon I turned towards him, and not knowing from his uniform whether he was a private soldier or a general officer, made no reply. To be sure, however, of making a safe and graceful *début* in this new scene, I politely took off my hat and let him pass.

The military reader will conclude that ere the next day's sun had set, my limbs had been taught a degree of modesty that excluded such pantomime as I have referred to above, and that holding your head up, as I had been self-advised to do, meant that the eye should "rest upon the ground, and at fifteen paces to the front."

Alas! how little I knew what a day might bring forth! I awoke too late, on the next morning, to see the squad-drill of the new cadets, which, I had been previously informed, would take place at half-past five. I expressed to the man in the office of the hotel my regret at having overslept this exercise. "Never mind," said he, dryly, "I reckon you'll have another chance to see it, if you stay long enough to graduate." There was yet a week before it would be absolutely necessary to report for duty. But there was at Rider's an officer who didn't allow any unbecoming diffidence or false modesty to prevent him from informing me that new cadets

were required to report immediately on their arrival at the post. There was nothing more to be said. My trunk was sent to the barracks forthwith, and I to the adjutant's office, where I reported, showed my papers, and wrote my name on the list of arrivals. I deposited about ninety dollars, every penny that remained, with the treasurer, and was then directed to report to Cadet-Lieutenant K. at the barracks. This officer, with three cadet-sergeants, had been detailed by the commandant to have the supervision of the new comers.

But I have overlooked an important part of this day's history. The officer whom I had seen at the hotel had pointed out to me a gallant looking man in full uniform, who, he said, would direct me to the adjutant's office, and thence to the barracks. As soon as I passed the gate of the hotel-yard and approached this person, he remarked, very blandly, that he supposed I was a new cadet; and when I took off my hat and nodded yes, added that he would show me the way to the place where I must report, as he was just walking in that direction. From the manner in which he spoke I concluded he was some high officer, and possibly the superintendent. He said, as we went along, that cadets, notwithstanding the rigors of the course, were allowed many

privileges. For instance, they were permitted to patronize a little soda-shop, kept, though under certain restrictions, within the cadet limits, where they could procure ices and other refreshments, which were "exceedingly palatable after a hard drill in such weather as this." He spoke so kindly that I made bold to invite him, as politely as I could, to pay that establishment a visit before I called upon the adjutant. After some apparent reluctance he consented, and condescendingly led the way thither.

I helped him successively to almost every delicacy that genial snuff-colored "aunty" could provide, and, if the quantity consumed were any criterion, he enjoyed it all with a relish that was really refreshing to behold. And how often since then, after one of the "hard drills" he had mentioned, have I wished for a small portion of this disbursement, that I might in a similar way disburse it over again. But I was intensely gratified by this unexpected good fortune, for money was now no object, as I must deposit it all with the treasurer; so the more he ate the more did I feel that I was conciliating an officer who would probably be a powerful ally, a friend at court, — perhaps the court itself. But, to make a long story short, how, I ask, was I to know that my distinguished guest was "the big red-headed drummer"?

Mais, revenons á nos moutons; which, being translated, means that I have about this time a "goat" to ride. I knocked at Lieutenant K.'s door. "Come in, Sir," and in I went.

"I — was — directed — to come here and report to" —

"Stand attention, Sir," fiercely cried the eldest of those who were present. "How dare you come into the presence of your superior officer in that grossly careless and unmilitary manner?" I thought my head was off, and of course didn't speak. "I'll have you imprisoned. Stand attention, Sir," (even louder than before,) "heels-together-and-on-the-same-line — toes-equally-turned-out — little-fingers-on-the-seams-of-your-pantaloons — button-your-coat — draw-in-your chin — throw-out-your-chest — cast-your-eyes-fifteen-paces-to-the-front — don't-you-let-me-see-you wearing-a-standing-collar-again — and-stand-*steady*-Sir. You've evidently mistaken your profession, Sir. In any other service, or at the seat of war, Sir, you would have been shot, Sir, without trial, Sir, for such conduct, Sir." I wished that I could have been in such "other service or at the seat of war," for Cadet-Sergeants W—— and F—— had been in the mean time occupied in straightening my back and legs, placing my feet, and correcting my position generally, in accordance with

the "position of the soldier" as laid down in Scott's Tactics. This, so it turned out, was the position I had been required to assume when ordered to stand attention, in regard to which I had as correct an idea as has the unmilitary reader. When you ask what were my sensations during this interesting performance, I reply that, during the most of it, I hadn't any whatever. I was so completely mystified and stupefied, that had the sergeants, in their zealous efforts to put my body within military limits, found it necessary to break a few of the smaller bones, it is by no means probable that I should have known it.

"I am ready now, Sir, to receive your report, Sir," continued the lieutenant. "What is your name, Sir?"

"Rich — Rich — Richard Rankanfile," said I, attempting to swallow my heart.

"Keep your hand *down*, Sir," shrieked one of my relentless body-guard. "Keep your eyes *up* and to the *front*, Sir," shouted the other, as in my effort to speak I had in the first case removed one of my little fingers from the seam of my pantaloons, and in the other had directed my eyes upon the lieutenant while he addressed me.

I proceeded thus to make my report, replying to whatever questions were asked, and receiving

a severe rebuke at every superfluous word, as well as for every unmilitary movement that my farmer-boy muscles were sure to make at each sentence I uttered. I remember, for instance, that I received a sharp reprimand because, as my knees were knocking each other violently, I didn't "stand steady in presence of a superior officer." I was as large as any of my persecutors, and when I left the apartment in charge of the one who was to show me my room, and felt a renewal of the circulation of my blood, I rashly thought how willingly I would forfeit my appointment, could I at that moment meet them, all three at once if necessary, anywhere but at West Point. But we have laughed since then, two of them and I, on the Pacific coast, over the recollections of that day, and mourned with them the untimely fate of the third, who, wounded by the arrow, died beneath the tomahawk.

We ascended to the fourth floor, and the sergeant giving the door a single thump,—the signal of an officer's approach, — opened it and bade me enter. As I did so two young men sprang from their seats and assumed the position that I had just been taught, looking directly to the front, which, as it happened, didn't admit of their seeing me at all. Forgetting that in the presence of a so-called officer mum was the only word, and

without reflecting that to his entrance was due the reception we met, I politely begged them not to rise on my account, when the sergeant's sharp tone brought me to my senses with the request, laconically expressed, that I would stop that talking. I was directed to remain where I was until sent for, and then our instructor left the apartment, while we three (respectable, it may be, *yesterday;* "plebes," "things," "animals," *to-day*) proceeded to a self-introduction, and to relate our military experience as far as it extended; — for they had reported but an hour before me, and I recollected having seen them both at the tea-table on the preceding evening.

How true is it that misery loves company! For within the space of about ten minutes, I had passed from the successive extremes of fright, anger, and dejection, to the most hearty mirth; the latter induced by the account my companions gave of their morning's adventures. One was a Virginian, sixteen years of age, and but a little more than the minimum height requisite for admission. The other, who was from Maine, had a tall and powerful frame, a good-natured and very intelligent countenance, and a heavy beard. He was twenty years old, but before he removed his whiskers, (which, however, he was required to do before the middle of the day,) would pass for

a much older man. It appeared, among other things, that they had reported together at the room of Cadet-Lieutenant K., and the Maine representative, wearing a very tall hat, acting as spokesman, and at the same time appearing rather to patronize the young Virginian, had been credited by the tri-bunal with a much greater number of years than he had lived. They accordingly invited the Yankee to be seated, complimented the "natural military bearing" of his son, whose arrival it gave them much pleasure to record, assured the supposed parent that the young man, without doubt, would graduate with distinction, and that he should receive all the attention and instruction in this auspicious commencement of his course, that their experience would enable them to impart. In reply to these flattering assurances, the elder candidate stammered out that this wasn't his son, but (to use his own words) —"I'm a — I came to — I've got a 'pointment for — for my own self." In much less time than it takes to tell it, he had obeyed the simultaneous and furious commands of all three to stand attention, by jumping from and kicking over his chair, dropping his hat and umbrella, and submitting, with the other candidate whose splendid military qualities had suddenly vanished, to the fulling-mill process above described.

We were visited an hour afterward, and instructed to go to the commissary's store for our furniture. This consisted of a military blanket, — we had brought sheets, pillow-cases, and a few other unsoldierlike luxuries from home, — pillow, looking-glass, bucket, wash-bowl, cocoanut dipper, soap, broom, candles, and candlestick. These, with a bottle of ink, twelve sheets of letter-paper, an arithmetic, slate, and two slate-pencils, were all tied up together by the clerk. Then inserting the broom-handle under the knot in the blanket, and shouldering each his load, our caravan started on its return. Possibly you may think there was something rather humiliating in being obliged thus to play the packhorse along that pleasant shady walk, frequented by visitors and residents, the grave and the gay, and in full view of everybody on the plain. But seeing that we were all treated alike, I performed the duty cheerfully, and even with a feeling of obstinate pride, and at last deposited my freight in our room. I even felt totally unaffected by the pitying but half smiling glances of the young ladies whom we had met, though I confess I was somewhat provoked by the saucy little boys who infested our path, and were continually crying out: "What do you think of military glory, Mr. Plebe? I s'pose your Pa and Ma think you're a young Napoleon. Keep

step, sir: — *one*, *two*, *three*, *four*; *one*, *two*, *three*; *one*, *one*, *one*."

The teeth-gnashing and honest indignation with which now, when my thoughts recur to it, I remember this conduct of those little rascally urchins, and the looking-glass and ink-bottle that I of course broke on the way to barracks, is, I trust, sufficient excuse for the abrupt termination of this otherwise interesting chapter.

CHAPTER V.

WE ARE EXAMINED — UNOFFICIALLY.

"My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel;
I know not where I am, nor what I do."

Our first drill, after the initiation, was in the Manual of Military House-keeping. Our instructors taught us the place for each article before enumerated, and when I recall the gentle hint we received on the subject of non-compliance with our instructions in this matter, it seems almost superfluous to say that, as a general rule, everything was thereafter found in its place. Perhaps I may refer, at least indirectly, to this subject again. Suffice it here to say that should I ever marry, — and God speed the time, — I shall have at least a few hints for the partner of my army sorrows in regard to our domestic affairs. It was not until we had returned to barracks at the end of the summer, that we were allowed a table, bedstead, chair, or mattress. But they permitted us, for the present, to have our trunks in quarters, and these served for chairs and table, and on them we indited our letters to friends at home.

And here comes in again a big parenthesis so

large as to blot out a little series of succeeding years. For now, so I'm told, Effeminacy rules where Spartan rigor once had sway. Can a cadet of the time of which I write believe that the cadet of to-day has, and is permitted to have, his furniture transported over that classic ground all the way from the store to barracks in a vulgar cart? Can he believe that he rests his recreant right arm, the very first day of his enlistment, on a luxurious iron table; his womanly bones on a chair of softest pine, and at night on a thick bed of downy straw? Alas! what a change has come over the spirit of the soldier-boy's dream. How are the pillars of our modern Rome crumbling to aristocratic powder!

We have said something about writing letters. If there is in the world a faithful correspondent, it is a new cadet during his first few weeks at the Military Academy. Seeing and learning as he does so much of a new world in so short a time, — and finding it often so different from his anticipations, — he is anxious to impart to his friends his impressions of each new feature, as it develops itself, of this novel life. And bitter are many of those epistles that go back to the old homestead from that little room in barracks, or the still smaller tent in camp, with many regrets that their unhappy authors had ever wished to

lead the life of a soldier. Such depression is, however, in almost every case, of short duration. Pride and the fear of ridicule alone prevented several of my classmates from resigning, in these first dark days of military life. They had just bade adieu to all their friends at home, as embarking in a new profession and one they intended to follow through life, and they, naturally, had no desire to return so soon to be taunted with having fled ingloriously from the first appearance of discipline.

How often has it been said that the rigor exercised toward a new cadet, unaccustomed as he is to such severity, is not only unnecessary but cruel, and subserves not the best interests of the institution. In fact most of the unsuccessful cadets of my day carried home this plea with others of the like nature to their parents and friends. The result has been, at various times, just what might be anticipated, and what was hoped by those who would make the institution bear the burden of their own faults. Great commotions have arisen in several states, crusades set on foot against the impiety and aristocracy of this great wooden war-horse that in an evil hour we welcomed to our citadel, and Congress been memorialized with adverse petitions as long as the creed of political corruption.

The truth is — by the way, how strange it is that my neighbor (if his opinion differs from mine) and myself lay down complacently, and with confident firmness, each his line of this same Protean Truth; and when they are compared, find them to make with each other an angle of exactly one hundred and eighty degrees — I say the truth is that under the able and indefatigable supervision of those engineer officers who, since 1817, have been called to the command of the Military Academy, everything possible has been done to make the system of discipline such, in every important particular, as to develop simultaneously, and to the utmost extent, the moral, mental, and physical constitution of those subjected to it. And I think I am safe in modestly asserting that no national school in the civilized — or if you please the uncivilized — world has been more successful in effecting the purposes for which it was established. The new cadet, on his first appearance, meets some petty exactions on the part of the older ones, who have, for a time, under the supervision of army officers, the immediate control of his instruction, that perhaps are not essentials of this almost perfect *régime*. Sometimes these things have been carried so far as to warrant official notice, and the persecutors have been tried by court-martial and

dismissed, on a charge of ungentlemanly and unmilitary conduct. But I insist that, at least, a thorough breaking in, at the commencement of the course, is the wisest policy, and most conducive to the best interests of all concerned. It teaches them never thereafter to be surprised at anything, to meet future difficulties with the greater fortitude, and make their reliance a reliance upon themselves. (I am quite sure that the reader's humble servant never experienced a feeling of more perfect self-reliance than when going up-stairs, after his introduction to Cadet-Lieutenant K. and his assistants.) For not only is their life in the line of the army to be an arduous one, but the course at the Military Academy, preparatory to that life, is probably the most confined and severe of any similar one in the world. Unavoidable decline of health may occasionally be the cause of failure, but I do not believe, as is sometimes asserted, that any young man of spirit has ever been frightened away by unnecessary strictness of the regulations or discipline.

But I have not been specially deputized to act as champion of the Military Academy. It is rather late in the day for any one to assume a position that would be about as fruitful (*i. e.* as productive of *new* fruit) as the assault on the

windmill by that other knight. Col. Richard M. Johnson, as long ago as 1834, settled all that question; which some, however, have ever since then tried so hard to unsettle. Should there prove to be room between the covers of this book, I propose to insert a part or the whole of the Report of the Congressional Committee on this subject, — of which committee he was chairman.

The maligners of this institution think that "*nascitur, non fit*" is as true of the great general as of the poet; hence it is possible that this representative of the State of Maine, who was one of my room-mates, might not, in any case, have been a Cæsar; yet I adduce him as the right man in the right place. Though for a long time, on account of his native awkwardness, the marked victim of petty authority, and innumerable practical jokes, his countenance always wore the same benignity of expression, whether in charge of the guard, for an imaginary or unpremeditated offence, or working out an unmistakable "max" in the mathematical section-room. Poor Tom! how intimately and inseparably is his name associated with the remembrance of all that is pleasant, or painful, in the history of those four years that succeeded our informal introduction.

The beating of the drums, at one o'clock, P. M., was the signal for repairing to the parade-ground for dinner roll-call; and this was the first opportunity afforded me for seeing all those of my classmates who had yet arrived. There were now about sixty of us, and a motley looking crowd it was. The pale-faced taciturn youth of the city, the weather-beaten heroes of the plough, the gaping New Englander, the scowling Southerner, the tobacco-chewing Westerner, all, from Maine to Texas, were represented. The expression of countenance, in many, was one of disappointment, and anxiety in regard to some unknown regulation they were to violate in the next movement of hand or foot. We were formed, by dint of much pushing and pulling on the part of our instructors, into two ranks at *parade rest*, and having received a short lesson, enunciated without commas, on the subject of springing like a flash of lightning from this position to that of attention at the command "tion," the roll was called and we started for the mess-hall. We were marched, in close order, in squads of fifteen or twenty each, losing the step of course, and tumbling over each other all the way, at the same time receiving bitter rebukes for our "inattention."

Was there ever a more ludicrous spectacle

than that of a dozen plebes on their first march in close order? Not one of them having any idea of the difference between *quick* and *common* time, or the meaning of any military command except, perhaps, *forward march* and *halt;* which latter was to us the most grateful word in the whole vocabulary. Our optical powers were, in obedience to instructions, concentrated upon the seam of the coat-collar of the man next in front. But I caught a glimpse, through the left corner of my eye, of civilian spectators, who, as we passed them, could hardly suppress a loud laugh, and I could not avoid thinking, with the frog-pond philosopher, it may be fun for you, but for our shins it is far otherwise. We were as unfortunate in the mess-hall as out of it; for we were sure to take seats before the command was given, to be too slow in obeying when it came, to move our seats without permission, or to err with regard to the command *rise*, as we had done in sitting down.

What was to me worse than all, a report was circulated that seemed to place me in a position of military disgrace. I was even accused of betraying an unsoldierlike weakness, and of allowing myself to be surprised by an occurrence of the most trivial nature, during the progress of this meal. I refer to the moment when I discovered

my unlucky head to be situated exactly in the very eccentric orbit of a small comet, much resembling what, in the Subsistence Department, would be called a half-boiled potato. This terrestrial body had been launched, when the back of the cadet-commandant was turned, by the rēckless (the first e of this word is long at West Point) hand of some one who didn't expect to survive the present examination.

We stumbled back as we had come, and so continued to do until the mysteries of the squad-drill had taught our feet to rise and fall together, with the same cadence as if parts of one machine. The first orders I received, after dinner, were to visit the barber and have my hair cropped. Being alone with that functionary, and unwilling to lose more than absolutely necessary of my luxuriant locks, I attempted to instruct him how I wished to have it done. "Ay, ay, Sir," he replied, and proceeded with his work until I, thinking it would suffice, made a remark to that effect. "I'll fix it all right, Sir," said he, and "clip," "clip," "clip," went the inexorable shears till the looking-glass didn't know me, and my thoughts had wandered all the way back to my father's flocks that were, about this time, undergoing a similar though much more ceremonious process. Probably "Old J." had really heard not a word

of all I had told him. Hadn't he cropped a hundred plebes every June for the last ten or fifteen years? *Perhaps* somebody knew better than he what the regulations required of him.

The afternoon was spent, after the bugle had called us to quarters at two o'clock, in talking over, we three, the wonders we had seen in our new life; the military histories of those of our classmates we had met during the intermission; and in receiving instruction in military etiquette, etc., from the sergeants, who paid us frequent visits. On these occasions they would expatiate with great severity on the monstrous breach of discipline, if they were so happy as to find that a white handkerchief drawn across the mantle-piece would receive a stain, or if some other equally important derangement and neglect of the proper police of our room was detected. At six o'clock we turned out for evening drill, where I was to learn the first rudiments of field evolutions. After the calling of the roll, we were divided off into squads of three each, — that is, those of us who had recently reported, — while those who had made some progress formed squads of eight or ten. Each of these small bodies of troops was officered by a cadet of one year's standing, who, just emerging from the meekness of their first year, as we replaced them, knew how to play the

martinet in the most magnificent and approved style. But they did their duty to themselves and the Government — and why shouldn't they? For the Commandant of Cadets was looking on, and those of them who did this duty best were to be promoted to the responsible office of Cadet-Corporal, and even to wear gold lace on both wrists.

This drill lasted one hour, in which time I had been taught sufficient of *parade rest*, *'tion squad*, *right face*, *left face*, *about face*, *right hand salute*, *forward march*, *common time*, and *halt*, to get the instructions so nicely arranged in my head, that when the command *right face* was given I was as sure to face to the left, as I was to get a reprimand for gross inattention after I had done so. There were, with me, two others whose faces I had never before seen. We learned each other's names through the medium of our drill-master's musical voice, as he would say, "Close up, Mr. J——, to thirteen inches; close up, I tell you, Sir! Point your toes, Mr. E——, and, Mr. Rankanfile, I will, Sir, report you for positive and wilful disobedience of orders, Sir. One, two, three, four; one, two, three; hep, hep, hep." On the occasion of the first rest allowed during the drill, I introduced myself to my fellow-soldiers by remarking, in a low tone, that this no doubt was very good exercise for a dyspeptic. The pertinent replies of

these poor fellows, who couldn't just then appreciate anything in the shape of a jest, were respectively, "As I'm not troubled with dyspepsia, I wish I had never heard of this infernal place," and "Confound that young puppy, if I could walk off government ground with him, I'd answer for the derangement of *his* digestive organs at supper."

A cup of bad coffee, with excellent bread and indifferent butter, made up, on that evening, the bill of almost the best supper I had ever eaten. During the half-hour's release from quarters that followed I met an old cadet, the kindness of whose manner, after the brazen face of cold discipline with which I had heretofore been everywhere greeted, pleased me exceedingly. He was very polite, invited me to his room, assured me that he had particularly noticed my military appearance while in ranks, and congratulated me on the happy choice I had made in selecting a profession. He made many other very agreeable remarks, and concluded by explaining the custom of cadets who were graduating, or going on furlough, (as he was doing,) to depend in a measure upon the new cadets for their citizen's clothing. I didn't allow him to proceed farther, but instantly placed at his disposal two new suits that I possessed, accepting in exchange four pairs of

white pantaloons, excellent, so he said, for a rainy day, when there were no ladies in camp, and an old uniform coat, which latter served me till mine was made. An old mattress was added to the collection, for it would make me appear so much like an old cadet to have two, and the officers would take no official notice of it. This called forth another instalment of my gratitude, and I offered him almost everything I possessed. He had accepted a two months' loan of my watch and trunk when the bugle sounded, and I bade my polite and disinterested friend good-night.

The sentinel inspected our room in ten minutes after the call to quarters. Having found us in too good order, the candles lighted, and all three sitting bolt upright on our trunks, he declared that we had every appearance of forming a cabal with some mutinous design, and ordered us to put out our lights immediately and retire to bed. Nothing could have been more welcome to us than this order after the fatigues of this eventful day, albeit the beds we now prepared were somewhat more primitive than we had hitherto known. Hardly had we stretched ourselves on our blankets, when the single thump which announced one of our *keepers* was heard, and in he walked. We could not see his face, though a dim light came from the hall lamp through the

door; but we knew from his language that his surprise was not feigned, nor the vehemence of his elegant diction counterfeit. The effect, naturally, was to make us dress and refold our bedding considerably quicker than we had spread it. But the sentinel paid dear for his fun, as he was reported by the sergeant and his punishment was a severe one. The lieutenant and his assistants, sustaining as they did all the responsibility, were, as this report showed, jealous of their exclusive privileges as instructors of the new cadets, and however much we might be the game of the other cadets out of study hours, theirs was to be the monopoly in their own jurisdiction.

The hour that intervened between this unseasonable *reveillé*, and the tattoo, which latter was the fife and drum signal for retiring, I spent in writing to my mother. I did so in a cheerful strain, for, after the first introduction to my new home and Lieutenant K., nothing had in any considerable degree disturbed my equanimity or ardor. Roused, at five o'clock next morning, by the shrill fife and the rattle of the drum on the lower floor of the building, we hurried on our clothes and flew rather than walked, and tumbled rather than flew, down to *reveillé* roll-call, after which there were about fifteen minutes to put our room in order, before the signal for drill. Af-

ter breakfast our academic duties commenced. One hour was devoted to recitation in arithmetic, and another to grammar, geography, etc. Our instructors in these subjects were cadets of three years' standing, and the recitations of rather a general nature, the object being to prepare us for the preliminary examination before the academic board. It was sometimes noticeable that the subjects discussed in the section-room on these occasions did not seem particularly appropriate to the object to be attained, though I suppose such instances resulted from a natural curiosity on the part of the instructor to find out the character of his pupils. The instruction of the sections in which I was placed was, nevertheless, sufficiently thorough after the first. I recollect, distinctly, how I acquitted myself at my first mathematical recitation. Two or three members of the section had been sent to the board, when Mr. Rankanfile was called. In conformity with instructions, I took my place in the middle of the floor, faced the instructor, and assumed the position of the soldier.

"You are appointed from the Acorn State, are you not, Sir?" said he.

"Yes, Sir."

"What are your politics, Mr. Rankanfile?"

"I'm an administration man, Sir," said I;

thinking there could be no treason, and that I was perfectly safe in upholding him who was commander-in-chief of the army and navy.

"Just as I expected, Sir; it is evident you've mistaken your calling. You should have known, ere this, that an officer of the army has nothing to do with politics. I will so far indulge your youth and inexperience, Sir, as to repeat my question as to your political predilections."

So eminently comprehensive did I consider my proposed reply, that I answered triumphantly, —

"I'm an army officer, Sir."

"Not by at least four long campaigns, Sir; and not only so, but you are guilty of gross assumption of authority, by such a declaration at this stage of your career so inauspiciously commenced. I will question you on another subject, Sir. Is Mr. Rankanfile, Senior, yet living, Sir?"

"I hope so," said I.

"A very unmilitary reply, Sir; the good of the service requires that I should know the exact truth, and I am as wise now as I was before. The Government has nothing to do with your hopes or fears, the latter of which, by the way, will never be tolerated in the army. Positiveness and conciseness, Sir, must characterize your every communication here, Sir. I wish now to

know whether Mr. Rankanfile, Senior, is a professional politician?"

"No, Sir, a farmer;" and this I thought was concise and to the point.

"Contumacy, Sir, and you shall be punished for it. I asked you, Sir, if your father was a politician, and you have entered gratuitously upon the subject of agriculture. I shall mark you zero on questions, but will give you a demonstration at the board. You are required to make a topographical sketch of your father's farm, on a scale of one ten-millionth, with a plan of all the buildings; and giving the tilled and unbroken land a fair valuation, as well as the buildings, stock, etc., including also the money at interest, at the same time discounting for all outstanding debts, I wish you to show what would be the amount of his annual tax, were it assessed at one twentieth per cent., and paid in bank-notes of your own State, at sixty cents on the dollar. To make your sketch more complete, I wish you to draw, also, a vertical projection of your grandfather, as he appeared on receiving the intelligence of the battle of New Orleans."

Now I had no more idea of what was meant by a topographical sketch, or a vertical projection, than I had of the minutest details of a future state. Otherwise, I would have assumed all the

necessary data in the problem, and promptly solved it. As it was I could only reply that I was unable to perform what was required; whereupon I was given to understand, in the concise manner he had just been inculcating, that compliance, not remonstrance, was the duty of the soldier. I therefore went to the board, but as far as concerned the drawing I might have stood there till this day (instead of playing bo-peep for the last six months with these treacherous Indians), had not the venerable professor of ethics walked unexpectedly and majestically into the room. He had come to see how our section was progressing, but his mission, I think, was this time a failure. It is true that during the enunciation of my proposition my instructor's manner had been so dignified and earnest, and his stern features so remote from every appearance of levity, that there was no one among our number who really knew whether or not there was anything more than a legitimate practical question in arithmetic and descriptive geometry in what was required. But the thing was soon settled now, for, without appearing in the least degree to lose his presence of mind, he said, —

" Mr. Rankanfile, you must not permit yourself, Sir, to be disconcerted in the section-room

by a simple problem in percentage, which is nothing more than an easy application of decimal fractions. I will give you some other subject to-day, Sir; but you must, before coming to the section-room again, Sir, look over this subject of decimals carefully."

Whereupon he enunciated some simple thing in vulgar fractions, which I solved immediately. Lucky fellow! He had narrowly escaped the fate of half a dozen others who were once tried for a similar offence and dismissed.

Tom had been assigned to another section; and, from the report he made to us on his return, he had been called upon to give a great part of the important statistics of the commerce of his native State, particularly of the forests and vicinity where his father's saw-mills were located. His exposition not being entirely satisfactory, the instructor, with reference to a practical problem, informed him that should he ever become an officer, and be sent in command of scouts and foraging expeditions, an exact account, to a penny, of the expenses incurred therein, and an inventory of all the items,— scalps, pork, corn, or poultry, — would have to be officially rendered. Preparatory, therefore, to such a future contingency, Tom was required to make upon the black-board an accurate list of all the items of

expenditure on his journey from home to West Point, with the total amount. This sum-total proved to be a very moderate one, but it cost him a severe rebuke for his extravagance; the instructor reminding him that his income in the army, as long as there was nothing better than a Seminole or Comanche camp to be plundered, would never warrant such reckless expenditure. But such advice to Tom was transporting vegeto-mineral fuel to Newcastle, or one of our great political speeches to Billingsgate. So, also, is this hint of my friend, who says that this chapter is growing long and tedious; for I intended, when I set out, to close up this account as soon as Tom should bring in his bill.

CHAPTER VI.

MY PREDECESSOR IMAGINES HIMSELF AN ORATOR.

"Act well thy part, there all the honor lies."

Thus, for the present, was our time spent between drills, police of rooms, recitations, very little study, and, during release from quarters, riding the war-goat. Many of the circumstances of this latter exercise, though puerile, were yet so novel and so important to us, that the victim himself, when relating them to the eager listeners of his own class, after he had returned to our portion of barracks, — where no old cadet except our three instructors and the sentinels were ever permitted, — could not avoid joining in the hearty laugh of his audience, who never failed to profit by his experience. But there were many instances where we received the most valuable advice, and kindest encouragement, from those cadets of the higher classes who condescended to request a visit from us. And especially was this the case where such were our respective

predecessors from the same Congressional District, or perhaps merely from "my state;" for, with us, the rivalry of states was as furious as in Congress. I was told, one evening after marching from tea, that one of the graduating class was waiting, outside our part of barracks, to speak with me. I accompanied him to his room where, after the production of a light, I recognized in him the person who had, on the second evening after my arrival, presided at a court-martial whereat I had been tried for positive and wilful disobedience of the orders of the Secretary of War, and sentenced to be shot at the exact hour — a little after midnight — when André's ghost makes his nightly round on the walls of Fort Putnam. The members of the court had procured some blue furlough coats, epaulettes, and dragoon sabres, which, with a wig for the president, false mustaches for the others, and the grave and awful dignity of the proceedings, including the earnest and eloquent appeals of the judge-advocate doing his utmost to defend me, dispelled finally all the suspicions I had at first entertained of its illegality. I had been arrested on the charge above stated, the specification thereof declaring that I had, and had been seen to have, money in my possession since the day I reported for duty. After the reading of the

charge and specification, and my plea of not guilty, I was ordered to be searched; when, to my horror, two pennies fell from my pockets in presence of the court.

The evidence was conclusive, for I had previously and solemnly stated that I had deposited every cent with the treasurer. I must, therefore, have been guilty of falsehood, (considered at West Point worse than theft,) or received a remittance in the mean time, which latter offence the regulations make "disobedience of orders," and, therefore, subjects the offender to the severest punishment. But these grave proceedings were unceremoniously closed by the appearance of the inspecting sentinel, and it then became evident how and why these mysterious coins had found their way into my pocket.

When I saw myself again in the presence of this individual, I expected some further attempt upon my credulity; but here I was happily disappointed. After asking what were my first impressions of the place and all about my adventures since I arrived, he proceeded:

"Mr. Rankanfile, I've done more than any other man to test your calibre since your arrival and, as I say, it is more to find out what you are made of than for my own amusement. Yet I confess we all learn, as you will in due time

find out, to enjoy not a little the time-honored custom of sacking the plebes. I will, however, flatter you by observing that you are the only one whom my dignity as a candidate for graduation has this year permitted me to disturb; the reason being that you are (what you have not hitherto known) my successor. It is true that you, being an entire stranger to me, could hardly expect me to devote as much time to your confusion as though you had been an old friend. You observe that the principle on which I base my remarks is that he who breaks the ice first with a crash is, if he survives it, the less likely to be drowned afterward. I have, nevertheless, tried to do my duty to you in this respect, and I trust my efforts will be gratefully appreciated."

I nodded "Yes" and smiled "Thank you."

"This thing so strongly advocated, of course, by outsiders, of giving consolatory sweetmeats to these candidates, is sometimes practised; but it is not the way to make soldiers of them, or to insure their success here."

I bowed a grave and heroic assent.

"You will find, if you remain, that you must stand on your own merits; and there is not in the world a situation where the rewards of strict attention to duty, or the punishment of carelessness and neglect are more sure."

"Ah," thought I, "then my fortune is made."

"Perhaps an account of my own experience may be of service to you, and, hoping that such may be the case, I will give you its synopsis."

I looked an unfeigned and eager "Please do."

"I came here having in the class above me two or three friends whom I had previously known at school."

I looked that I thought him very fortunate.

"They showed their good-will, at the same time with their indiscretion, by taking my part in every little difficulty I met, which had the effect to put me in bad odor with those who were placed over me, as well as with many of my own classmates. They assured me that on account of my previous success at school I had nothing to fear here; that, as I had already been over the greater part of the cadet course of the first two years, and was sure of graduating at least with a tolerable standing, and probably very high, it was entirely unnecessary for me to allow my prospects to be a source of any anxiety."

I indicated "Of course it was."

"These assurances came from as noble and generous hearts as ever beat under a gray coat; and you can easily imagine that they were very grateful to the ears of one who, like me, had been taught to distrust his own abilities, and who had

hardly dared to hope for success among so many whose early advantages had been greater than mine. As a consequence, and beginning where the initial letter of my name placed me and where I might have remained, in the first section in all my studies, I laughed to scorn the anxieties of those of my class-mates who to-day have graduated far above me. It was even in my first encampment that I followed, one dark stormy night, two of my third-class friends to Benny Haven's and all over the Falls. And, not long after our return from that encampment, and before I had seen the middle of my algebra, I had made a nocturnal visit to Cold Spring. 'Why not,' said I to myself, 'enjoy what little I can in the midst of all these privations, as long as I'm on that part of my academic course which, as I have been so often over it, requires so little study?'"

I echoed "Yes, why not?"

"So lucky was I that no officer detected me during these first six months in any serious scrape, though on two occasions the night inspection was made within an hour after my return to quarters. I had also kept my position in the section, but the January examination undeceived my confidence. A little study on the lesson of each day had sustained me thus far, but I was

not prepared for an examination on the whole subject. They sent me to the board to discuss the subject of cubic equations. I *fessed* cold, and was thereby thrown to the foot of the second section. This roused me from my carelessness and dissipation, and, for a few weeks after, I applied myself diligently to study. But not being transferred back to the first section when I felt that I deserved it, I made war on my own best interests by distrusting the instructors and professors who I felt had all conspired against me. The consequence was I fell off again; and though I avoided a downward transfer till the June examination, it was sure to come then as it did. The Board questioned me in trigonometry, which examination I passed creditably; but broke down on demonstration at the black-board of some simple problem in descriptive geometry. Thus had I begun the course standing alphabetically fourth on the list, — which place I doubt not I might have maintained, — and the end of my first year now found me, in general merit, exactly in the middle of my class."

"A good *medium* standing," thought I.

"One of my reasons for believing that I could, if I would, have maintained my first position, is that I have, for the last three years, had for my room-mate the cadet who to-day has graduated

second; and I think he will readily acknowledge that my natural aptitude for mathematical studies and for drawing, besides a retentive memory, have rendered him more frequent service than I have received from him, when we sought together the solution of many a difficult problem. But that is a subject for his discussion, not mine. He was careful and persevering; I, reckless and confident. When I went to visit my home, on a furlough of two months, I stood but six files from the foot of my class; having led a forlorn hope at my second annual examination, and passed it by the skin of my teeth."

"All the more glory," said I enthusiastically.

"Besides all this, I had a hundred and forty demerit, whereas ten more would have prevented me from getting my furlough at all."

I didn't know what he meant by "a hundred and forty demerit," but found out by experience afterward.

"At this time not one of my three friends before mentioned remained at the academy. Two of them had failed at examination; the other had been dismissed, by the sentence of a general court-martial, for being off limits and bringing liquor into barracks. I will only refer to the coldness with which my father met me on my return home, — the son who, though having still a foot-

hold at West Point, had disappointed so sadly his fondest hopes, — or to the mother so ready to forgive, at the same time that she besought me to mend my faults. These were not without their effect upon me, insomuch that, since my return from that otherwise happy furlough, I've neither tasted a drop of ardent spirits, nor set foot beyond the government limits. But still, on account of wanting that discipline of mind I had thus and so long neglected, I was unable to avoid demerit. Nor could I in any way destroy the effect on my class rank of the demerit I had received during the first two years. It was, too, a long time before I could entirely overcome the prejudice, on the part of my instructors, which my previous conduct had occasioned, or give them fully to understand that I had made an irrevocable resolution to be perfectly studious. But I have no reason to complain of the result; and there is to-night no occasion to be dissatisfied with what I have been able to effect during the last two years. This afternoon when the names were called for the presentation of diplomas, mine appeared high in the teens on a list of near forty; and to-night I am packing my trunk with as light a heart as ever beat in a soldier's breast. There are many things in this confined, severe, and busy cadet course upon which I shall through life look

back with longing and delightful remembrance — where ties of friendship have been cemented, and these old mountains, this river, and all these cadet scenes, are so intimately associated with the reminiscences of four continuous years of my boyish dreams, — still this is a day, and *the* day, to which I have so long looked forward with glorious anticipation. And it has not been disappointed; for I go now to visit friends proud of my success, and then, with unabated ardor, I hope to do my duty to the Government in whatever part of our wide domain my duty shall be assigned.

"I have said, Mr. Rankanfile, more, perhaps, of myself than was necessary, (I shook my head that I didn't think so at all,) and much more than I had intended. (I was sorry to think he had ever designed to say less.) But further with respect to yourself. Perhaps you imagine, as I did once, that this being the national institution, and more or less the sport of political power, your prospects are unfavorable as compared with those whose fathers are eminent in political or moneyed influence. (Doubtless I did so imagine.) If so, you will be disappointed. (I determined to try and bear up under it.) For, as I told you before, every man here is allowed to and must stand on his own merit, be he high

or low, rich or poor. There is drawn here, both in the academic and military departments, a line of duty that influence cannot erase, and he who passes it does so not with more impunity though his parent fill the highest offices of the government."

"Perhaps you think I'll believe this," said I to myself.

"Your instructors will be officers of the army, most of whom have seen service, who know their duties in the section-room and in the field, and whose commissions cannot, without just and apparent cause, be snatched from them by the caprice of men in power."

I had heard it said that the extent of his Excellency's prerogative, in this respect, had been the subject of much debate; and the decision had been reserved.

"Fear of the displeasure of their superiors cannot therefore oppose their sense of justice. Hence in the recitations and other duties of each day, and at the end of the annual or quadrennial course, true merit, whether patrician or plebeian, is bound to carry the day. You must learn first, Sir, to obey implicitly here, as well as everywhere, the constituted authorities."

Moses and Rebecca Rankanfile had taught

me that before I could articulate a seditious word.

"And you will find that those among you now who seem best prepared by previous advantages, will not in the end prove the most successful. You will have to enter the lists with many who have for years been making every preparation for a cadet appointment, knowing they would obtain it as soon as they should have attained the prescribed age. They have been at college, attended preparatory military schools, been over a great many of the subjects they are to study here, and deem their success certain. Many are the failures and disappointments that such assurance entails. It is true that confidence and self-reliance are indispensable to success here as everywhere, but they must be combined with a steady and incessant application; it being always kept in mind that excellence is attained only by labor."

Truth, every word of it, for I had learned it in the classics at my former school, and could even say the last part of it in Latin.

"Hence is it that he who comes with habits and morals well disciplined, a fair and unimpaired mental capacity, and a fixed determination to yield to no obstacle, — come whence he may, with attainments barely equal to the pre-

liminary examination, — is the cadet who will render a satisfactory account of himself at the end of four years and beyond it. It is a favorite idea among many here that it requires an abler man to stand at the foot of his class throughout the course than at the head of it. Little time will be required to find out what all that means; though you will doubtless see evidences of great natural capacity in one who has no ambition beyond mere graduation. He cares nothing for class rank, and studies only sufficient for a daily mark that will, with a successful examination, carry him safely through; and then just previous to that examination, by dint of a powerful memory and a capability for one or two days or nights of intense application, seizes those points of the entire course that with a little good luck insure his success. These are some of the symptoms of that epidemic which is called Genius. But it is a dangerous game to play, as a score of the sixty unfortunates who began with us can testify. The broad assertion that such men make the bravest and best officers, and are the most whole-souled, generous natures of their respective classes, is simply a mistake. Yet perhaps, in the world at large, personal ambition often implies a narrow selfishness, and upon it in many instances depends in

great measure the accumulation of wealth and political fame. I trust you will observe that such a spirit cannot exist here, or, if it does, that it is deservedly reprobated."

I also trusted and felt that I had made a good bargain.

"Generosity, almost to a fault, is a quality naturally developed by the peculiar circumstances in which the corps of cadets is placed, and may you never have occasion to gainsay it."

"*Esto perpetua*, and let Nature have her course," nodded I.

"Should you, then, ever find yourself at the head of your class, as I truly hope you may, and should you fail in a single instance to render any desired and reasonable assistance to another, though he were one who was striving in fair and open emulation to rise above you, such cowardly selfishness would meet its just reward in the contempt of every classmate."

I felt a rush of brains to my head, and secretly, but firmly, resolved never, in such an emergency, to be guilty of such disreputable conduct.

"Remember never to expect any demonstrative approval from your instructors. Should your genius excite their admiration, or should you by close application to study, and a frank

avowal of ignorance in the section-room, upon any point you do not fully comprehend, thus merit their approval, you will find it out, if ever, in after-years, on the frontier or on the Atlantic or Pacific coast. Their intercourse with you here will be that of the most respectful deference on the one side, and dignified reserve on the other; which fits the one for future command, and allows the other to do his impartial duty to all. You are aware that in our country the military is subordinate to the civil power. Be advised, then, never hereafter to be swayed by political prejudice, or to mingle in party strife, remembering always, whether here or elsewhere, that your duty is to sustain the administration whence" ——

"All right?" says the sentinel, who, ten minutes having elapsed since the bugle called to quarters, was inspecting the rooms on his post to see that every visitor had returned to his duty.

"No, Sir," replied Mr. C., to whom I had been listening with the utmost attention for full half an hour.

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Now although I have given, almost *verbatim*, the kind suggestions which my predecessor made, solely for my benefit, still the merits of this chapter have been more completely ignored, by my

malevolent mess-matical critic, than even those of the last. I am not a little surprised, by this critical ambuscade, and, without waiting for the philosopher's sober second thought, will retaliate by telling him the anecdote of the news-boy.

I was travelling once from Albany to Fort Independence, when there entered the cars at Springfield an elderly man, whose hat, of monstrous dimensions, covered and concealed almost everything above his coat-collar, and who took a seat directly in front of mine. As we approached Worcester, — noted, I believe, for its great hospital for the insane, — a boy entered the car crying,

"Buy Webster's great speech, only two cents!"

The market for the papers seemed very active until he arrived at the seat in front of me.

"Have a paper, sir? Webster's great speech — country going to blazes — for only two cents."

"No, my boy," replied the hat; "it isn't worth half the money."

"Wal, if them's yer idees, old feller," retorted the surprised and indignant urchin, "I reckon you're drunk, or else goin' to Wooster 'Osp'l."

It is not, in the present instance, an important part of my story when I add that the "old feller" here addressed, was the man that once made a speech in reply to Colonel Hayne of South Carolina.

CHAPTER VII.

EXAMINED OFFICIALLY.

"Happy the youth in *Davies'* axioms tried."

I was thus found visiting when I should have been in my quarters, and was not only reported by the sentinel who had caught me there, but reached my own room just in season to find that another sentinel had there detected my absence. The results were an immediate reprimand from Sergeant W——, and confinement next day, when not on duty, to my quarters, where a melancholy amusement was found in watching from my window the boisterously happy furlough-men, and the more quiet and dignified graduates, taking leave of those who were to remain. I could see many a moist eye as the members of the lower classes bade adieu to graduates who, for one, two, or three years, had been, respectively, their condescending friends. There were a few who, having been for two years so fondly anticipating a visit to their homes and as fondly expected, suddenly found this indulgence snatched

from their grasp by a recent accumulation of demerit marks, beyond the furlough limit, or by an unsuccessful examination. The former of these were to forfeit their leave of absence merely; the latter had severed forever their connection with the Military Academy. It was in orders, published at parade on the preceding evening, and not till then, that these last poor fellows had heard that terrible word, — deficient; and they now only awaited the authority of the Secretary of War for their discharge. That was, therefore, a final and nervous embrace which they were giving their more fortunate classmates whom, but twenty-four hours since, they had such delightful anticipations of accompanying. My predecessor did not so far forget "my plebe" as to neglect coming to give me a parting word:

"Good-bye, Mr. Rankanfile. God bless you, Sir. The eyes of the Old —th District are upon you, and I'll carry them good news of your prospects. The words of the Tennesseean hero of De Bexar are all you need more from me: 'be sure you're right, then forward.' Good-bye, Sir."

He had not intended to lead me into any trouble when sending for me on the previous evening. On the contrary, he wished to say everything possible for my benefit, after, as he acknowledged, assisting in various ways, of

which the court was only one, to give me a thorough initiation. But he heard the sound of the bugle, as also did I,— though I forgot it again,— and knew I had received sufficient instruction to teach me not to loiter at such a time, even though he, a graduate, might not have finished his remarks. I was therefore allowed to learn wisdom by experience; which I certainly did, for the time being, on the subject of prompt obedience to the calls of Old B——'s bugle. Is there anything mortal about that same old bugle? Will it never wear out? Let us hope not; but if it does, let it be buried with military honors. It is a distinctive feature, in its various and well-known calls, of the reminiscences of every hour in the academic day, of every academic duty, and of every half-wrought problem at the treacherous black-board, and how greatly is it a creditor to the discipline of the whole army.

Some portions of the discourse with which C—— had favored me might, it is true, have come with a better grace from one older in the service, or from the lips of one who, not being himself of those of whom he spoke, might have avoided the charge of self-flattery. But he felt that he was talking to one whom his advice could not harm, and he knew not that it would ever appear upon any, especially a *printed*, page.

And there was much here by which I might have profited, had I possessed a will strong enough to avoid his errors.

But C—— was gone. The last adieu had been said, the hip, hip, hurrah of the two classes, from the deck of the boat as it glided past the Lover's Leap, Cozzens's Dock, and Benny Haven's, had died away in the mountains, and barrack and plain seemed almost deserted. In spite of my present troubles I was proud to feel that I alone was now the legal exponent of the military spirit of the —th Congressional District of my native State. In pleasant revery I, too, was now, after having won a degree of local fame by attention and perseverance during the two years to follow this day, hastening home on furlough, that beacon-light of the third and fourth class man's pilgrimage.

"Fourth section, candid-a-a-ates turn out," ringing through the halls, roused me from my dream, and down I went, three flights of iron steps, half a staircase at a bound, wondering what was coming now. It proved to be something important, and particularly so to him who was, physically, in the least degree unsound. We formed ranks immediately, and were marched to the hospital. Here the Medical Board, consisting of the surgeon and assistant-

surgeon stationed at West Point, and another medical officer who had been ordered thither for this special duty, were waiting to decide upon our physical merits before the Academic Board should dissect the brain exclusively. I had little to fear as regarded my physical constitution, though I was small of stature. But the idea of ignoring not only woollen, but all lighter fabrics, and presenting myself like a South Sea Islander to a board of cotton-battinged and gold-laced surgeons, none of whom I had ever seen, was somewhat inimical to my notions of decorum. The good of old King Samuel's service required it, and outside etiquette had nothing to say. I have said that in my own case there was little to fear; still I could not feel altogether sanguine of success. For who of my limited experience could predict the verdict of three grim army-surgeons, in the face of those thousand-and-one disqualifying diseases and suspicions of disease enumerated in the circular of the Secretary of War? As it happened, I was the first to be examined; and when my name was called by the hospital-steward, I entered the awful presence, as pale as any boy might be supposed to be when he expected to be flayed alive. In fact, such a description of the blood-thirsty cutting-and-sawing proclivities of the medical staff of an army winds

up the account of every battle in history, that I had a lurking suspicion they would all rush at me, for a leg or an arm, before they reflected they were now on another duty. I know this part of my subject better now. Perhaps our medical staff will accept a toast from the Rankanfile — great R and little r — of the service. May they be ever — I write it standing — last in war and homœopathic in peace, as they are first in the hearts of the army.

The kind tone and manner of the senior officer reassured me: "Walk in, young gentleman; never fear, sir, your uniform is an excellent fit, sir." I gave my name, age, and State whence appointed, to the one who acted as secretary; then, in obedience to the request of another, stepped upon a platform, which showed, at a glance, I was more than the requisite five feet in height. There was no symptom of pulmonary disease; and, in answer to questions of the board, I assured them there was no hereditary consumption in the Rankanfile family. My teeth were found, — as they have since proved on the plains, — equal to anything the subsistence department could furnish. My eyesight was tested by some colors, coarse print, etc., at the opposite side of the twelve-by-fourteen room. In short, a very few minutes sufficed to show whether

or not I was physically qualified for my profession.

"Shall I pass, sir?" said I, eager to know the result, but totally ignorant that this was not the military mode of informing myself.

"You will be duly advised on that subject," was the reply, as all three smiled at my simplicity.

As I was dressing, I thought of the oft-repeated declaration, that the tailor makes the man. But it seemed to me that this maxim was hardly applicable to the case of a West Point medical examination.

Tom, as might have been foreseen, passed triumphantly; for he was stalwart and strong, perfect in bone and muscle. As my grandfather used to say, when boasting of younger days, "every narve and siner was hickory." Notwithstanding all this, and ever distrustful of his own excellence, physical and otherwise, he had afforded his room-mates infinite amusement by his dismal apprehensions of the result of this examination. For among other disqualifying malformations mentioned in the circular were the two items "bunions" and "flat feet." He and the dictionary had translated the former corns; and as he found one or two small articles of that nature, he had, after receiving his appointment, suffered

intense pain by an unnecessary and oft-repeated application of lunar caustic, by which he had even injured his feet. The amusing part of his anxiety was with reference to the other subject, flat feet. As that part of his healthy frame was rather fleshy, and the arch so well filled as not to favor aristocracy's test, he gave himself no little uneasiness about it; for, as he said, in order to be comfortable, he wished to be "always on the safe side." Neither of us was able entirely to calm his fears on this score, in the face of the regulations that seemed to proscribe such a foot. Still we felt that, should Tom be found wanting, few of us could hope to be successful. Indulging thus his gloomy forebodings, hardly a day had passed since our arrival in which he had not tested the extent of this supposed deformity. On one occasion, we found him wetting the soles of his feet in water, and walking about the floor of the room, in order to observe, from an inspection of the footprints, how much of what should have been the hollow of his foot had touched the floor. He was exultant, therefore, when, returning from the hospital, he exclaimed, "They didn't say a word about my feet."

The next morning was one of the most anxious excitement, for the question of our admission was now to be settled. It is true, the doom of some

of us had been sealed on the previous day, but who they were, we could not for the present know. The academic board who were now to examine us knew all about the result of yesterday's ordeal, and it seemed probable that they would waste very little time on a candidate already rejected. When, therefore, I had been examined, and had resumed my seat, I tried to discover in their manner toward each one of those who were yet to be heard the betrayal of the secret. But the sequel proved I was mistaken in every instance.

For this examination, we were marched to the library, where we found the board in session, and ready to begin. It was composed of the superintendent of the Military Academy, a high officer of the engineer corps of the army, the Commandant of Cadets, (an officer of infantry,) and the professors, — heads of the various departments in our future course of study. The superintendent received the report of our section-marcher, and then the bland manner and gentle voice of the professor of mathematics had the effect, as was doubtless intended, to give us confidence. There was much hesitation in what seemed to me, while I remained at my seat, very simple questions; and I thought that should I be questioned on subjects as simple, I would show my

classmates an exemplary promptness, and should pass a brilliant examination. My turn soon came, and I took my position in the middle of the floor, and faced the cannon's mouth.

"Mr. Rankanfile, you may turn to the board (he meant the *black* one), and write down these quantities decimally, — one and seven tenths, ten and seventeen hundredths, and one hundred and seventeen ten thousandths. Now add those numbers together, and, having found their sum, place it also under the form of an improper fraction."

I was highly elated, and so ambitious to show how simple and contemptible I deemed my task, that I proceeded in an off-hand and rapid manner to write down the result, and faced about immediately. I had made no mistake in the figures; but when I was called upon to recite, the reward of my contempt for an example in the addition of decimals proved to be that I had made a mistake in pointing off the result, and therefore the equivalent vulgar fraction was all wrong. Probably the board were satisfied that I understood my subject, or I should not be writing this journal to-day. But my consternation on account of having made such a mistake deprived me entirely of all presence of mind. I was next handed a book, from which I read, no doubt, quite fluently; though what the subject

was, I knew not then, and don't now. We were all about alike in this respect; for afterward, when one of us was remarking that he had been required to read from the "History of the United States," (all of us having used the same book,) he was corrected by another, who declared it was a collection of Æsop's fables, and by a third, who insisted that it was the Old Testament.

All having been examined, the professor of ethics went with us to another apartment, where desks and stationery were prepared, and where our orthography and penmanship were to be tested. After arranging us so that we could not render any assistance to each other, and telling us that should any one be seen to lend or receive such aid in any manner, he would be punished by a verdict of deficiency, the professor dictated a number of sentences for us to write, the last of which was, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

The malice prepense with which I here place a nervous and ugly period to this chapter, and leave you in the most painful suspense regarding the result of my examination, deserves perhaps to be explained. I was awoke this morning an hour before *reveillé* by the report of a musket, that roused the whole garrison. It

proved to be the effect of one or two extra rations of whisky, which an Irish sentinel had secretly purchased from a more temperate comrade, or rather one who preferred half a dollar to a gill of "'Nongehaly." He had fired at a shirt, left by the laundress on a bush near his post, and which, as he said, he "tuk fur a shpook, or wan o' thim thavin Injines." My nervousness, to give it no harsher name, has raged all day to such an extent as to postpone, for twenty-four hours, further converse with my reader. And this notwithstanding the offender is now in the black-hole, and in face of his audacious intimation, when he came up for punishment, that (the universal plea of the old soldier) "the Liftinnint would hardly expect all the virtues, and timperance besides, for eight dollars the month."

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMP, TOM, AND HARRY.

"O wad some power the giftie gie us."

During the release from quarters that evening, many of us crowded together, in one room, to discuss the probable results of the examination. I noted on this occasion the degree of confidence each expressed in regard to his own success. And it was not a little surprising that at least eight of the twelve or fourteen who, we afterward learned, had been found deficient, were now the most certain of their safety. As these same young gentlemen were the most prompt to give some of their classmates, myself included, the pleasing assurance that the mistakes we had made would hardly be overlooked, I could not avoid thinking of the fable of Jupiter and the saddle-bags that he has thrown over the neck of each of his children.

But Jove had made one mistake and, as I firmly believed, only one in Tom's composi-

tion. For his conduct on this, as on every other occasion, showed that the bags had in his case been reversed. While he was prepared to see the success of every classmate confirmed, he was convinced that his own military experience was labor lost, and that in a few days he should have left West Point and be wending his way —— whither? He knew not. He declared he would never go home to disgrace thus his father's family, and that the soil of "Old Maine," his loved native State, should never be polluted by his recreant footsteps until he had in some more successful field proved himself more worthy of her.

Now I had heard every word of his examination, and knew that, however clumsy and remote from brilliancy his answers had been, he had made not one mistake; while his stalwart and naturally military form, and intelligent countenance, had evidently made a favorable impression upon every member of the Academic Board.

While we were conferring on these subjects, some one proposed that all of us, remembering the sentences we had written at the examination, should write them again now, exactly as we had done then, and test, if need be, the orthography by reference to the dictionary.

This elicited some grave errors on the part of a half-dozen of our number, but there was nothing wrong in Tom's. He, however, anxiously and modestly said to me that I had probably not written the word perseverance at the examination as I had now done, pointing at the same time to the *e* at the end of the third syllable. I saw with horror the mistake, and, though I was not positive whether or not I had so written it, this circumstance, taken in connection with my inexcusable error at the black-board, made me feel extremely uneasy. I was surprised, as indeed were we all, to find on the sheet of one of our number, who was nearly a thousand miles from his home, the important word of the last sentence propounded, written "Creat*ur*," or worse, for the first letter was even not a capital. This discovery made me forget my own apprehensions in the contemplation of his prospects, although it is possible that one or both of those errors was the effect of inadvertence merely. At the same time that I regarded him with pity, I could hardly avoid feeling that should his rejection be grounded on that error alone, he would have no reason to complain of its justice. And I thought it would even be condign punishment, not only to himself, but also

to his parents who had sent him such a distance to contend for academic honors, bringing such fundamental deficiency.

His case was one of a thousand similar ones; for his tutor, unwilling to incur the displeasure of the young man's father, who was a gentleman of wealth and importance, had declared the son's abilities and attainments to be of a very high order, and that he had nothing to fear, in scholastic competition, at West Point or elsewhere. The father, like many another fond parent, was loath to believe there could be any deficiency in his own darling, and, of course, promising, son. He had been unable to act the Roman, by throwing off a parent's tender prejudice in careful scrutiny of the youth's fitness for the position he had long intended him to fill. And he had refused to learn that one, beneath him in social rank and dependent on his patronage for support, would hardly say aught unfavorable to his pupil, however strongly urged to speak candidly. "May God give thee better judgment as freely as I give thee thy discharge," said the aged priest to his over-faithful servant, when, by repeated invitation, he had at last warned the old man that the infirmities of his dotage were become too apparent in every discourse. But I will

leave this discussion of human nature in general, and the duties of parents in particular, to another pen than this, that is doing little more than transcribing a cadet's diary. If what I have said here will help to convince any man that the mere fact of a boy being his son, without an impartial test of his talents, does not necessarily make him a Napoleon or a Pitt, it will be fruit enough for this *e millibus unum* of similar digressions. I await the fervid thanks of appreciative parents for my disinterested labors. This unsuccessful candidate returned a wiser man to the house of his disappointed father, once the best friend, now the bitterest enemy, of the Military Academy. He was not known to have made, in his examination, any other important mistake than the one I have mentioned; so that, among ourselves, the universal inference was that he had justly paid the penalty of thus misspelling that single word.

I partly succeeded in quieting Tom's fears, but he said he would be on the safe side, and prepare himself for the worst. He accordingly lost no time in writing to his father, and acquainting him with his probable failure.

Had I been relieved from these anxieties, the next morning would have been a par-

ticularly happy one; for orders had been published in obedience to which we were going to march into summer encampment. The custom of taking up a line of march through the country, like a small army on an offensive campaign, had been discontinued; and now, every season, the camp was pitched on the east side of the plateau, within a few hundred yards of the barrack. The fatigue of marching into camp was therefore less from travel under arms than from manual labor in preparing to march, pitching tents, and transporting baggage from barrack after the camp had been established. How distinctly I call to mind the implicit confidence reposed in our physical abilities by the older cadets, during the diverting exercises of that busy day!

The morning was spent by all the cadets in removing from their quarters to the store-rooms those articles that the regulations of camp made superfluous. After dinner the whole corps was sized, and we for this ceremony were put in ranks with the other cadets. The four companies "A" "B" "C" "D," which together make up the cadet battalion, had not been equally represented in the graduating and furlough classes that were now gone, and this fact made a new equalization necessary.

We, the fourth class, were included, because we were now to be assigned to companies. Under the direction of the commandant and his subordinate officers, we were all drawn up in a single line, the tallest man first, the next behind him, and so on to the last. The graduation was almost insensible through the whole line, from him who stood six feet four down to the shortest, who was but five feet and an eighth of an inch, and who, as it happened, was our little room-mate. The taller half of this long line was to form the two flank companies, "A" and "D," and the other half the centre companies, "B" and "C." It would seem that this disparity of stature would mar the beauty of the line when drawn up at parade. The effect is, however, rather the contrary; for the members of each company are so arranged that, when in "line of battle," there is a regular and pleasing, though not too apparent, gradation from the centre outward in both directions.

At four, P. M., the column was formed, and marched from barrack, drums beating and colors unfurled, while we, the "un-uniformed fourth," followed in three squads, of thirty or more each, our music the euphonious "hep, hep, hep," of our instructors, and our colors every variety of cos-

tume the country could furnish. Arrived upon the ground where all the materials for the tents were collected, we were dispersed among the older ones, and, of course, did most of the work, while they dictated. In about an hour, the rectangular camping-ground had been dotted with the white canvas houses of this miniature army, and the sentinels were walking their posts which would not be again vacated until the end of August. The guard-tents were ranged in front, the parade-ground intervening between these and the body of the encampment, behind which was the row of tents for the officers who were in command of the respective companies, and who were the assistant instructors of infantry tactics, and in rear of all was the more spacious pavilion of the commandant.

There are few who travel upon the Hudson that have not been sufficiently curious and patriotic to stop, though it were but for an hour, as they passed up or down in summer, to look upon this encampment and its lovely surroundings. Without pausing, therefore, for the present, outside, I will smuggle the reader across the sentinel's post, and take a peep under the canvas walls. I had been so fortunate, when we were sized, as to appear in the taller half of the line, though very near the point of division, and

succeeded, as I had hoped, in being attached to the same company with Tom. Our little Virginian — little in stature only, and, at the moment at which I write, a staff officer of distinction — having been assigned to one of the centre companies, we reluctantly parted with him.

Several of the tents assigned to members of the fourth class had four occupants, but there were fortunately but three in mine. Tom and myself shared it with Harry F——, whose home was less than a day's journey from West Point, and who, therefore, would have but a short distance to travel, when the first January examination should have closed his career among us. He had a kind heart, with a considerable share of general information, and made a most agreeable tent-mate. His great characteristic was a grandiloquent and affected style of expression, which made him famous throughout the camp, and afforded no little amusement to the older cadets, as well as to his own classmates. I remember distinctly the circumstances under which he was first punished for a military offence, by confinement in the guard-tent. It was about noon of a sultry day in the latter part of June, that Tom, Harry, and myself, having just returned from the eleven, A. M., squad-drill, had stretched ourselves on our blankets for a little

rest. We were evidently appearing too comfortable to suit a second or third classman's ideas of fourth-class propriety, and one who occupied the tent opposite thought it a good opportunity to draw out the genius of our new companion.

"Plebe, I want your opinions on the subject of our foreign relations. From which, think you, have we most to fear: Mrs. Bull's big lioness, the roosters of France, or the Spanish mule?"

Harry half rose, and, sitting upright, with his left hand on the locker, and his right free for gesticulation above the head of Tom, who lay beside him, very modestly replied, —

"Why, Mr. G——, on that subject, whether my opinion be worth aught or no, I will respond with pleasure to the compliment implied in your remark. The liberties, Sir, of this mighty confederation, this second and improved and, may I add, stereotyped edition of the Roman empire, look down with an eagle gaze of contempt upon that carrion which you were pleased, and rightfully so, to mention last. The tumult of her domestic dissensions are to-day ringing the knell of her departed glory; and the historical to-morrow will add another star to the ever-growing galaxy of this western firmament. One who has seen as much of the world as you

have, Mr. G——, need not be told that I refer to that gem of the ocean, that priceless pearl, though blackened by the foul stain of slavery, that down-trodden and bleeding victim of Spanish despotism, — the island of Cuba.

Little need I say, in this connection, of France. I venture to remark that there is not one among us who is not as familiar with her modern history as with that of his own life. Under Napoleon, her eagles, sweeping every intermediate kingdom and empire, carried the terror of her name to the frozen den of the Russian bear. But though for a time humbled in the unequal contest with nature's elements, they soar to-day in little less than pristine glory. But, Sir, the sympathies of the French are with us; and even had they a navy to hurl upon our seaboard, left defenceless by the millennium-seeking policy of those legislators who look in their own generation for the promised agricultural transformation of the spear and the sword, even then, I say, we have from this source nothing to fear, nay, everything to hope.

Not so with the British lion. I do not mean, Mr. G——, that the refulgence of the star of empire, as westward it makes its way, can be extinguished by Britain's power; but I *do* mean that the wheels of our stupendous destiny may be in a measure clogged by her who watches,

with jealous eye, from behind the amphibious bulwark of her terrible navy, every unwieldy stride in our march of progress. I repeat emphatically, sir, that from her, in our present suicidal policy, we have nothing to hope, we have everything to fear and" ——

Here our oratorical hero was interrupted by our friend across the way, to whose edification he thought his remarks were greatly contributing. The reader who has been through the campaign of a fourth-class encampment, and who has, of course, had similar experience, knows that Harry had said, in his last unfinished sentence, just what G——, in first addressing him, had, for reasons of his own, intended he should say. He lost no time in calling out for a corporal of the guard, who promptly appeared, with two privates, in front of our tent, when G—— preferred against Harry charges of treason, and conduct unbecoming an American officer, in betraying thus openly and shamelessly a fear of the power of any nation whatsoever. The countenances of the corporal's guard, even, indicated that they keenly felt the stain that this traitor had thus fixed upon the patriotism and fearless devotion of our military brotherhood.

Tom had fallen asleep at the commencement of Harry's speech, and was unconscious through-

out the whole transaction; while I, understanding from the beginning a joke so similar to my own experience, was so unfortunate as to smile in the presence of an armed patrol. The corporal did not fail to notice this conduct, so indecorous on my part, where the misfortune of a classmate was involved. I was, therefore, immediately declared privy to the treason, as having lain near the speaker throughout his seditious harangue, without having uttered a word of remonstrance; and I began to perceive much less diversion in the affair when Harry and myself were marched off to the prisoner's tent together. The two officers of the guard relieved each other in expatiating on the heinous nature of the offence with which we were charged. The junior of these ordered the sergeant of the guard to read to us the Articles of War pertaining to such cases; and we were then left, in what Harry seemed to think his tomb, to await sentence. But our good luck was more apparent just then than ever before or since. For we had been confined hardly fifteen minutes when, as we afterward learned, G—— came up in breathless haste from his tent, and advised that we be instantly released, as the commandant's orderly was looking for Mr. F—— at that moment. We were accordingly discharged in considerably less time than I occupy in relat-

ing it, the officer of the guard coolly saying that the cause of the leniency thus shown us would be published at a future day. The commandant or one of the other officers had sent for Harry on some unimportant matter, and G——, discovering the orderly at our tent, was not a little frightened, lest it might be found out where Mr. F—— was, and why he was there.

We were now settled in camp, (if that is not a contradiction of terms,) and were prepared, as we thought, to lead a more comfortable life than we had done in barrack. And we were not wholly disappointed; for we were now infinitely less confined, being permitted to walk anywhere within the chain of sentinels, and it was only twice each day that the police of our tents was inspected. This inspection was, moreover, now made by officers of the army, who were not so unhappy at being unable to find anything wrong as our friends the cadet sergeants had been. Our quarters, it is true, were not extensive; the ground floor, as Harry expressed it, being divided off into one apartment six feet square, and there being no second story; but we found in our tent worlds of room, totally indifferent as we had become to the ordinary inconveniences of life. Cooking, which is ordinarily an important feature of camp life, was a military duty that devolved on none of

us, for we always marched to the mess-hall for rations, as we had done when in barrack. Blankets and even pillows, in the way of bedding, were allowed us; and a pole suspended horizontally from the ridge-pole of the tent served as wardrobe for our uniform. A locker with three compartments, each about fourteen inches square by sixteen deep, served for chairs, sofa, and *escritoire;* and we each appropriated one of these, wherein was kept our linen, stationery, sewing materials, and trinkets, and which, when we had occasion to take anything out, would, of course, look in five minutes after a careful arrangement, as if it had been artistically stirred up with a drumstick. A gun-rack for muskets, a tin box for candles and musket-cleaning materials, a broom, wash-bowl, dipper, and bucket, and a small looking-glass suspended along the front tent-pole, completed the appointments of our new home. There were some among us, as there are ambitious men in every community, who aspired to the luxury of a washstand; in which case, three long tent pegs were driven obliquely into the ground, crossing each other above so as to form a convenient seat for the bowl. The older cadets more generally indulged in these, on account, according to Tom's theory, of the rigidity of the spinal column hav-

ing, in their case, become chronic, while the plebes were as yet more able to bend.

Apropos of the looking-glass mentioned above, I am reminded of poor Tom's experience with that terrible engine of self-destruction, that, more than anything else in creation, has cast every unkind reflection upon the deformities of our fallen nature. He was intently looking into it, one evening, to discover whether he had sufficient beard to render it necessary to shave before appearing at inspection the next morning. An old cadet observed him while so doing, and had him sent to the guard-tent, where were read the charge, and specifications thereof, preferred against him. These, after the necessary preliminaries, were expressed as follows: —

"CHARGE: Effeminate conduct, unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and to the prejudice of good order and military discipline:

"SPECIFICATION I: In this that he, the said cadet, did, at West Point, New York, on or about the second day of July 18—, look, in a shameless and effeminate manner, and for five consecutive minutes or thereabouts, into a mirror; and that with unmistakable signs of self-approval.

"SPECIFICATION II.: In this that he, the cadet

aforesaid, at the time and place aforesaid, and looking as aforesaid in the aforesaid mirror, and on being remonstrated with by his superior officer on account of his disgraceful conduct, did reply, 'You shut your ugly mouth and go to grass and thunder; I'll look in the glass as much as I durn please,' or words to that effect.

"All this at West Point, New York, on or about the second day of July 18—."

To which charge and specifications the accused pleaded "guilty with justification," though, having been allowed counsel, I believe he was so fortunate as to get off through some flaw in the evidence.

On the third day after moving into camp the orders were published that showed who had been successful, and who were the unfortunates, at our recent examination. Although subjected at this moment to a discipline that never knew a moment's entire relaxation, there was yet such a charm in the life we led that I was never happier than at the moment I heard my name pronounced in the list of successful candidates. Tom was not less happy, though much more quiet in expressing his gratification. But we soon awoke to a consciousness of the fact that,

while we were thus rejoicing, others of our number, most of whom had been as anxious as ourselves, were suffering the most bitter chagrin. Situated as we were with reference to each other and to the rest of the corps, it is not strange, aside from the ordinary generous impulses of the human heart, that all the successful ones should have extended a heartfelt sympathy to the unfortunate. But when we bade them adieu, we could not but think their disappointment much less severe than if it were deferred till some subsequent examination, when stronger ties should have been formed but to be severed. And we who remained looked, as the others rode away, involuntarily upon each other; wondering whose turn would come next, and who at length were to compose the two fifths of our present number that were finally to graduate. The poor fellows made a virtue of necessity, and went off in apparently glorious spirits. They had all unanimously and desperately resolved never to revisit their homes till a brighter day had dawned on their respective fortunes, but we never doubted that they woke on the following morning to wiser purposes. One of their number declared his determination to have his revenge, by calling upon his mother's brother, a United States senator, and going with him to the Secretary of War to show

up the defects of our military system in general, and more particularly of the administration of the Military Academy. Another, a rough but hearty specimen of the far-Westerner, with more resignation and good-nature, declared his intention of being a lifelong bushfighter against the Indians, merely out of respect to what, under a luckier star, he might have been. It was he who, having carried a compass in some primary explorations on the frontier, made himself immortal at the examination before the academic board. A book, the same we all used, was handed him from which to read; and this was probably the only emergency that ever met his self-possession and found it at a disadvantage. "The fact is," said he boldly — and I think the Secretary of War should have considered well the remark before he confirmed his rejection — "the fact is, I can't read much, but I'm some on surveyin'."

After the lapse of a few days Tom received and read to me a reply to the letter which he had addressed to his father. There was no severity in its language, the old gentleman assuring him that he felt satisfied this misfortune was not the result of any recent indiscretion that could bring reproach upon his ever dutiful son, whom he now invited home again, where he might lead a more quiet and comfortable life, and one per-

haps more congenial to his tastes. The disappointment of the parent, though affectionately disguised, seemed nevertheless a grievous one.

Tom regretted the unnecessary pain he had inflicted on his friends, but seemed very happy and perhaps a little proud when he received this letter, and stretched himself at full length on a blanket spread upon the tent floor to answer it. Mr. Michael Free's confidence in his father's stubbornness at the door of purgatory, after getting a hand and foot outside, was never more firm than Tom's determination to graduate, now that his admission was no longer an uncertainty. His father's letter was valuable for more reasons than one; for, being unaware that in case of rejection Tom's money would be refunded by the treasurer, he had enclosed a liberal remittance. We concluded, as we were reaping the benefits of this enclosure in ices and cake at J.'s that Maine bills were bankable at West Point, and that this being found deficient at the preliminary examination, was an institution that ought to be perpetuated.

I have never felt any unpleasant effect of those ices until this moment. The inconsistency with which they were flavored demands, and so does the reader, an explanation. I have said that the having money *in possession* was made by the

regulations positive and wilful disobedience of orders. I have no doubt this was the military reason that whenever we received a secret *billet-doux*, recommending us to the kind offices of some banking institution in New York, we immediately put it *out of possession;* and, instead of leaving it with our old friend the treasurer, invariably passed by on the other side and deposited it with "Aunty." If she defaulted, and she never failed to do so as far as the money itself was concerned, we always secured fifty per cent. (no more nor less) in chattels personal. Nobody had ever told her that pastry and confectionery were contraband of war, and no cadet believed they were. We were satisfied, for the tables of the cadets' mess-hall "groaned" only under the *avoirdupois* of the straightforward military substantials of life, excellent brain- and muscle-making materials, but exclusive, painfully so, of everything unbecoming the soldier. The regulations were satisfied, for the ink that engrossed them never paled but grew blacker and blacker every day (in that big book the Oracle) bold and unblushing. And Aunty was satisfied, — for she made a fortune.

But these things came to pass, and as my manuscript goes to press I recall it to interpolate. My young military informant brings the sad in-

telligence that the records of the soda-shop may be found in the archives of the institution, and that Aunty discounts no longer. But let me do serious justice to the refined and truly democratic sentiment in which this oasis found its proscription. Not Liberty but Equality is the genius of the institution. An humane forbearance on the part of the superintendent toward this pleasant little retreat was exercised as long as all agreed it was harmless. But an observant officer has detected the fact that its existence has drawn a line in the corps of cadets, a line between affluence and poverty. He watched the poorer half of the battalion marching to a substantial but simple meal after the evening parade, while the other half strolled leisurely away to spend their hour of recreation in supping sumptuously for money. The argument was irresistible. So is the regulation that now requires all to march to the mess-hall together.

About the tenth of July the fourth class was turned out and marched to the adjutant's office. The occasion was one of great novelty to us and will seem to those unacquainted with its importance a singular one. It was no less than an official inquiry into the pecuniary circumstances and the occupations of our respective fathers; and one of the words "indigent," "moderate," or "affluent,"

was the only response required in regard to the former, when we were one by one called up. This step was thought necessary, so we were told, to show how groundless were the assertions of many disappointed applicants that nothing but wealth and position could open the path to this "aristocratic" institution of a republican government. This inquisition had for its object besides the above, to fortify the academy against another charge, namely, that many who had failed after being admitted, had done so because they had not possessed the early advantages of their more successful competitors, to make sufficient progress in study before coming here. Of course this may well be anywhere, but the design was to show, as the records in very many instances do, that cadets may graduate with the highest honors who as boys had earned their bread by hard manual labor, who were entirely without previous discipline of mind, and who owed their success to good natural parts and industrious application alone. Even the son of a general-in-chief of our army once awoke too late to the realization of all that I have said about the perfect impartiality of the examinations. So also did the son of a distinguished member of the Board of Visitors, before the very eyes of his parent; and the same of many others, equally illustrative of this subject.

Tom and myself naturally entertained similar ideas of pecuniary wealth and pecuniary poverty. Our respective sires had earned by the sweat of their own brows the foundation of all they possessed, and had taught us to labor with our hands as well. We thought to gratify one of the many kinds of vanity, by rendering a verdict of "indigent" against their estates, reconciling the prevarication if there were any by all sorts of boyish possibilities of the confiscation, some time, of the frontier farm of the one and the saw-mills of the other. But I fear it would have been rather an expensive joke, had the fact of our childish conspiracy come to the knowledge of the authorities. In the conference held that evening in our tent, and so characteristic of plebes, where a discussion of what has passed and conjectures open-mouthed of what is to come are so freely indulged in, we learned that not more than three or four had felt authorized to say "affluent," while Tom and I were almost the only ones who had gone to the other extreme. There were among us several who were sons of officers of the army, all of whom had answered "moderate." I suppose they proceeded on the principle that a man is happy and rich if he has a well-burnished conscience, a sixpence in his pocket, and enough of to-day's rations in the house for supper. If so,

they could hardly plead "indigent;" for though it is often said that actual observation would seem to make poverty a *sine qua non* of an officer's position, yet there is wealth in the thought of a month's pay always in prospective, if the subject of the appropriation happens to be thought of before the adjournment of Congress.

But this last is a subject I should not have trespassed upon; for there is here a concession implied that, by an unmarried man, should never have been made. Indeed, my messmate encouragingly remarks that, having examined carefully and impartially every page of this long chapter, he must conclude that I have all this time been hammering away upon a nut that, being at last cracked, is found without meat. Thus having succeeded only in pounding inexcusably my own pecuniary fingers, I shall, romantically speaking, lay by my pen for the sword; or to express it more practically shall don cap, overcoat, and rusty sabre, and visit the pickets; for that is the name we give the sleepy Hibernian who is to-night the sole advanced guard I have on duty.

CHAPTER IX.

WE MARCH ON GUARD — AND INTO WINTER-QUARTERS.

"For the apparel oft proclaims the man."

By the fourth of July we had so far progressed in our drill that some of us were put on guard as sentinels, though I was not pronounced qualified until the tenth. Muskets had been issued to us as soon as we had learned to march, execute the facings, etc., etc. without them, and then the manual of arms was taught us; which, with some instruction in the duties of the sentinel, fitted us for being detailed on this duty. We had during this encampment no studies except infantry tactics, which we recited to an officer in a quiet and romantic spot near Kosciuszko's Monument. Our new uniforms, the reception of which gave us new life as assimilating us more with our duties, had been issued as rapidly as they could be prepared. We were now dressed exactly as those cadets of longer standing (except that our uniforms would never fit like theirs, and that the cadet officers wore a little badge of gold

lace distinction) and were pleased to flatter ourselves that outsiders never would know we were fourth-class men, except they were told of it. But this vanity was humbled on several occasions, for instance the following: Tom and I were on our way to the commissary's, one day about the middle of July, when, on passing a group of strangers near the flag-staff, whose conversation was so loud as to be quite audible, we heard a lady say to her male attendant, —

"Now, Mr. Pettymaitre, you say you can class a cadet at first sight; what are those two?"

"Plebes," said the fellow with a semi-sneer; "the gait alone is sufficient. Look at the cap set on the back of the head, the wrinkled and untidy shirt-collars, the concave chest of the shorter one, the trailing shoestring, the ink-spot on his trousers, and withal that school-boy, open-mouthed, trifling manner in which they are lolling along. Now just notice those two behind them."

And sure enough (confound our ill-luck, for the lady was beautiful and young,) there were, not more than forty yards in rear of us, two third-class men, who, besides, were among those that were "boning corporalship." Thus it proved that the lion's skin was a dead failure, that the ears after all would stick out, and our vanity was made to smart worse than the back of the ambitious donkey in the fable.

The guard that "marched on" each morning was composed of twenty-four cadet privates, six of whom were detailed from each company. Besides these, there were the cadet officer of the day, two officers of the guard, one sergeant, and three corporals. The twenty-four privates were divided into three reliefs of eight each, and, as the chain of posts about the camp required eight sentinels, each entire relief walked post, in their turn, two hours, while the other reliefs, their equipments always on, and muskets close at hand, were reposing at the guard-tents. During the encampment, the duties of the sentinels are, as near as may be, similar to those of soldiers in the field. The fatigue of walking post, as it involves no violent exercise, promotes health and muscular development. The most perfect vigilance is required night and day, and there are very many regulations by means of which the lack of it is detected. The embarrassment in the midst of so many new duties usually makes a fourth-class man's first night on post quite an eventful one.

There was little of interest in the experience of Tom, Harry, or myself, in this respect; but I recall distinctly, at this moment, the night that Harry went on post. It was a lovely moonlight night, and my sleep was broken, on account of having slept considerably during the preceding

day. Our tent being within six paces of sentinel's post No. 3, the approach of the relief, as it made its way around the camp on its errand of mercy, roused me. The weather was very warm, and, our tent walls on the north side being raised to admit a breath of the light breeze, I looked out. It was a little after midnight, and the relief that had awakened me was the third. This I knew from having noticed that the sentinel who was pacing the post up and down past our row of tents was none other than Harry, whom I knew to belong to that relief. I reflected that this was his first attempt, and, as he had just been posted, I resolved to watch his motions. But a few minutes elapsed before the corporal came down to see if Harry and the others were conversant with their orders and duties as sentinels, he being responsible that they knew them, or, at least, that they had been properly taught. As he approached, he was challenged, the countersign was demanded and given, and Harry passed triumphantly an examination in the sentinel's catechism, one of the most extensive works ever unpublished. He knew how to open his arms to a "friend" who came with the countersign, and how to leave him at the point of his bayonet, if he approached without it. He knew exactly every step of the programme in case an "invad-

ing army," with or without the countersign, should unannounced approach his post, and the reception to be given a "steamboat" under similar circumstances. His musket being empty, he knew that in case of a great conflagration or extensive mutiny in his immediate vicinity, he ought to "discharge his firelock;" and that on the occurrence of a very serious earthquake, he was to call the omnipotent "corporal." But I will not attempt to tell all he knew in his official capacity; nor did he, for he knew that the *parole* was the name of a lady at Rider's, and the countersign that of another at Cozzens', both particular and alternate friends of the *officer in charge;* but he said not a word about it to the corporal. It is true that he confessed he knew not wherein the tone of voice in which he challenged a major-general should differ from that in challenging a lieutenant, nor did he even quite comprehend how the shoulder-strap indicated the wearer's rank in the darkness of midnight.

Not the least important of the instructions he so fluently recited was the charge to call the corporal of the guard, and turn over to him all those who approached his post without the countersign, and on no account whatever to allow such persons to pass, or to hold any conversation with them.

The corporal passed on, and Harry, staring

wildly in every direction, rushed, apparently half mad, from one end of his post to the other, his head working on a universal joint, in his frantic efforts to watch, all at once, every point from which the enemy might approach. Half an hour had elapsed, when the jingle of a cadet sword was heard in the direction of the guard tents. "Wh-who comes there?" cried the sentinel, with a shriek that roused half the encampment. The officer of the guard continued to approach without making any reply. "Wh-who comes there, I tell ye? My orders are to — Halt, sir! You cannot — I — Corporal o' the guard, number" —— But ere he had pronounced the number of his post, the officer had interrupted him with a sharp rebuke, telling him he was the officer of the guard, and threatening him with severe punishment, for using such language to his superior officer. This frightened him out of the few wits he had left, and he attempted an apology, which was immediately repressed. He replied to all the questions the officer asked with an occasional misgiving, and a "But wh-where's the countersign?" and the latter finally required and received the countersign from the sentinel, in order to assure himself, as he said, that No. 3 knew it. He even succeeded in getting possession of Harry's musket, for the ostensible purpose

of inspecting it, and coolly remarking, as he returned it, that he was a brave sentinel that would thus give his orders, the countersign, and, at last, even his musket to one who had not, in any manner, shown himself entitled to such consideration, he went his way, leaving poor Harry to reflect on the beautiful array of demerit that this direct and gross violation of first principles would cost him.

I now turned away to renew negotiations with unmilitary Morpheus (as Harry would have expressed it), but had not closed my eyes, when two tall forms, enveloped each in a sheet, issued from the opposite tent, and glided noiselessly toward the upper end of the company-ground. You may perhaps remember the triumph Harry's good fortune had gained over neighbor G——, a few days before, and for which the latter had never yet received any satisfaction, except it may have been the legitimate cleaning of his musket on two or three occasions, and the daily transportation of a pail of water. I watched these spectres as one of them succeeded in darting safely across No. 4, and the other approached Harry along the line of tents. "Who comes there?" shrieked the sentinel again, in a tone that visibly frightened even the ghost, who now stood very near where I lay. "The Spirit of Retributive Ablution," replied a solemn and hollow voice, which certainly had no

enlightening effect on Harry's confused brain, uppermost in which, since his recent encounter, was the word countersign. "H—! Advance with the counter—" and sure enough it came, in the form of two buckets of cold water, one in front, and the other from among the little cedars in the rear. Before our hero had recovered sufficiently to open his eyes or mouth, his visitors had enveloped him snugly in one of the sheets, rolled him gently into a little hollow near his post, inverted the scavenger's wheelbarrow over him, and quietly taken their leave. They then made a swift circuit through company "B," caught each a foot of two sleeping fourth-class men which were protruding from beneath the tent cloth, left them rapidly and dexterously sprawling in the middle of the company-ground, to find their own reckoning as they woke, and then retired to their own tent, from which they had been absent not more than three and a quarter minutes, at the farthest.

Ignoring all the occurrences of the night, I asked Harry next day what success he had met; with this detailed result: "Oh this gord dooty that's such a boogbear in the corps I consider disgoostingly simple." He found out a few days afterward who was his aquarian visitor, and thereafter seemed to entertain very

little affectionate regard for Mr G——; but it is not improbable that the remembrance of this night was a bond of friendship, as they were taking together their unambitious and unromantic way toward New York after the January examination.

Our camp life was not without some gleams of sunshine, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which we labored. There was a tacit understanding on all sides that plebes were not expected to attend the dancing-parties, unless it were to accompany some relative who was visiting the Point; yet we were allowed an hour during the day for instruction in dancing, which the several classes received separately. And now, while on this subject, I call to mind having heard a pompous individual remark once, about this time, that possibly the Government might find some more plausible mode of increasing the national debt than the employment of a "foreign mustache" to teach its soldiers how to dance. But this was a total waste of honest and patriotic indignation; for although our venerable "Uncle" has spared perhaps but little to make the Military Academy as perfect in all its appointments as the national school should be, yet the appropriations for its maintenance are made with

a magnificent economy worthy of a nation of less extensive resources. However, the item of the little French dancing-master, as I informed the sarcastic gentleman, did not happen to be the source of any additional expense to the Government. And perhaps it really is not an unwise feature of the unwritten regulations that permits the cultivation of this light accomplishment. Perhaps, were there no such diversion and no such intercourse with the refinement of outside society as these little triweekly reunions — which begin after eight and break up at nine o'clock and fifty minutes — afford, perhaps the laborious recreation from nine and a half months' continuous application to books, and the confinement during two or three successive years to the cadet limits, might be tedious either in anticipation or experience or both. Again, notwithstanding the strict observance of military etiquette toward our superiors and, on duty, toward each other, it would be less strange than the electric telegraph, if, without some such indulgence, so many young men cooped up for years within the area of a single square mile should lose, or fail to cultivate, that suavity of manner which, in some degree at least, is one of the necessaries of life. I mention this, because I have

so often heard men advance the opinion that the resort hither of so many visitors should be prevented, on the ground that it distracts the attention of the cadets from their duties. I think the argument a very weak one and, strange to say, the whole corps of cadets will be found unanimously to sustain my opinion. Those duties are almost entirely military during the travelling season, and the advantages of such a policy would fail by far to compensate for the thousand accompanying evils. Nor would our "sovereigns," proprietors of the soil, easily submit to an embargo which would deprive them not only of the privilege of observing with their own eyes the workings of this system of discipline, but cut them off from a visit, at pleasure, to the scenes of some of the most memorable events of the Revolution.

While our cadet brethren of the higher classes were enjoying those occasional Terpsichorean banquets in the academic building, where the shortness of their duration served as a condiment, and the profusion of ice-water, martial music, and beauty fully substantiated the favorite charge of "luxury" so often preferred, we, or those of us not on guard, were enjoying the evening variously. In crowded tent we conjectured the future, drowned con-

jecture and all dull care in song, or perhaps went, as we were permitted to do under certain restrictions, to bathe for an hour in the Hudson. Some were so fortunate as to receive visits from their relatives, and these perhaps spent the evening with them at the hotel, by the special permission of the superintendent who allowed them, however, to enter only the public apartments of that building. Or these friends would visit us in the encampment, on the grassy limits of the parade-ground where a camp-stool furnished a military seat, where the twilight and the darkness, the tramp of the sentinels, the sound of music as it came over the plain, the cadet uniforms faintly seen as they passed from tent to tent of the half lighted camp, and, last and greatest, this friendly communion with its news from home, reminiscences of the past, and anticipations of the future, formed an entertainment never to be forgotten. Those days are gone, and gone forever, — if it were really unmanly to weep I would not thus have soiled this page, — but there's no brighter scene in "life's poor play" than when boyhood verges to maturity, when, in whatever sphere of life, the counsels of parents have taken root and are yielding resolutions of virtue and patriotism which we then

feel to be invincible. And now when the reminiscences of former years beguile me for an hour, whether it be in a ruder camp in the depths of the forest, or behind the fortifications of the Atlantic seaboard, 'tis there they find their sweetest resting-place in the evening twilight of that highland retreat that Freedom's God locked from the power of the tyrant, and our country's history has sanctified to every American heart.

Camp life had at length become a formula, a monotonous and laborious but not uninteresting routine. Half the season had passed, and our condition had materially improved. We were of course to bear during the entire year the title that distinguishes the new cadet, and found it incumbent on us always to pay court, to some extent, to the dignity of the other classes, particularly the one next above us, yet we had begun to be treated with greater consideration by all. We had now become well drilled, prepared to appear with the battalion at dress-parade, and to do the duties of the sentinel. We had donned the uniform common to all, had each atoned for real or imaginary offences in the prisoner's tent under the charge of the guard, and were subject to receive demerit for every military or moral of-

fence for which we should now be reported. This last had really not been the case with the fourth class until after the publication of a special order to that effect on the fifteenth of July. We were very happy to learn that all our previous military troubles had resulted in nothing lasting, and that a kind consideration for our inexperience on the part of the authorities permitted us to begin now with a clean page on the "Black Book."

I had done duty as a prisoner for the last time on the preceding evening, and the accusation against me was of too important a nature to be easily forgotten. I had shown unwarrantable audacity by entering into quite a controversy on political subjects with a member of the second class who had been deprived of the furlough that his classmates were then enjoying. He, thinking I was "getting rather fast for a plebe," resolved to have me punished and therefore inquired which I thought the greater man, the commander-in-chief or General Jackson. Now it so happened that my father was an uncompromising Jackson man, and I had been taught from infancy to revere the hero of New Orleans, and "Hurrah for Jackson" had been the most important part of my political experience. So without hesitating a moment to consider the comparative merits

of him whom to-day we are proud to call the greatest living general, I replied, "General Jackson."

"Turn out a patrol," was the eager response of my second-class friend, "and take this man to the guard-tent for gross disrespect to the commander-in-chief."

There being no army officer within sight, and the officer of the day being in a remote part of the encampment, the sentence was promptly carried into effect. Of course the result would have been in nowise different, had I decided the other way. In that case the charge would have been disrespect to the memory of the Cotton-Bag Hero and to an ex-president of the United States. I never fully forgave the cadet for this outrage on that dignity that I thought I had now attained, until the following summer, when some classmates, and I among the rest, were trying a "late importation" for a similar offence. And thus ended the bulk of my experience as the victim of this particular phase of that universal Fag game that is played in the school and in the world, from the homeless, — the beggar of bread, to the prince, — the beggar of rest.

We hailed with anxious delight the near approach of September, and the end of the present encampment. We looked on with a happy ex-

citement when the twenty-eighth of August brought the novel scenes incident to the return of the furlough class, and reckoned the time, to a day, when, if prospered, we too should visit the friends at home. "Only two years," cried Harry, (poor fellow, he reckoned without his — mathematical instructor,) "only two years," cried even Tom, "only two years," cried we all. These events were making progress and brought to mind more vividly the fact that the academic year was about to commence where duties, more arduous than those of camp, were in store for us. Orders were this evening published at parade detailing the programme of the next day, when the camp was to be broken up and the corps to march into winter-quarters. The last dancing-party was given on that evening and was, by special indulgence, extended until eleven o'clock, though, perhaps, not without manifest injury to the service. In the mean time the plebes, to a man, assembled, two or three deep, in three adjacent tents and discussed, more eagerly than ever, the recent and the anticipated developments. Not one among us but had heard something new about the kind of life we were to lead during the coming winter, and some new prediction of an old cadet about our actual and relative success, all of which were duly reported and com-

pared. There were also other objects of interest to attract our attention to-night, as some new classmates had arrived during the day. There were half a dozen of them, some of whom were the successors thus promptly appointed of others who had been rejected at our preliminary examination. The rest had been appointed at the same time with us, but had obtained, on some plea or other, permission to delay reporting until the end of the encampment or first of September. Hence we called them "seps," a *sobriquet* they retained throughout the cadet course, and will retain through life. They had been examined to-day and all proved successful, and we gave them this evening an encouraging account of the adventures of a plebe encampment, which were likely to be but little extenuated; and we pictured the beauties of the squad-drill which they alone had in prospect after returning to barrack.

Twenty-four hours after this night's tattoo, Tom and I were spreading our mattresses and blankets on an iron bedstead, in a clean apartment on the fourth floor of the barrack. Here though there were no superfluous articles of furniture to deny the strict economy of our domestic arrangements, we were rejoicing in the possession of so much room for ourselves, and for the few items of personal property that were allowed us.

The rain could no longer beat in at our door, nor would the upsetting of an inkstand now necessarily ruin the greater part of our wardrobe.

I must tell you the last remark Tom uttered on the day we reëntered barracks. It was remarkable because it was the most unmilitary and insubordinate expression that was ever known to escape his lips. Indeed it was a remark more nearly approaching a murmur, than any other I ever heard from him whose invincible determination was to do his duty in the profession he had chosen, and never to waste time and temper over unavoidable inconveniences.

Ten o'clock, *taps*, lights out, and "all in, Sir," had successively and almost simultaneously passed, and I, unwilling to close my eyes without a single tribute to the memory of our first and longest encampment, whispered to the occupant of the other alcove,

"I say, Tom, what would you take to go through another plebe camp?"

"Take! by gun, I'd take caustic with strychnine gravy," and we fell asleep; he to rest, and I to dream of something for the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEAUTIES OF THE DEMERIT SYSTEM.

"One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow."

I WILL devote this chapter to whatever may suggest itself on the subject of the demerit system and my experience thereunder.

The principal of the punishments to which cadets are liable are expulsion, suspension for one year, extra guard-duty, confinement to quarters and to light or dark prison. But the more immediate penalty is the *demerit*, a certain number of which are entailed by each reported and unexplained violation of the regulations. In my day two hundred was the limit for an entire year; this limit passed, the result was dismissal. A recent regulation which makes the limit one hundred for six months, has essentially changed and improved the former.

The number registered against a cadet for any particular offence depends upon the nature of the

offence, — its grade. If, for instance, it be disobedience of orders, mutinous conduct, sitting or lying down while on post as sentinel, these being among the most serious of military offences, he finds opposite the charge in the Black Book at the adjutant's office, a registration of eight or ten *demerit.* For trifling in ranks at parade or elsewhere, perhaps half that number; while a single one is the penalty of a "late" or an unbuttoned coat.

The aggregate of these decides his standing on the *conduct roll* at the end of the year, or at graduation, when the class rank is determined. As much importance is given to this subject, in the determination of the graduating rank, as to one of the most important branches of study, — mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy, or engineering. The various offences, moral or military, committed each day, whether noticed by the cadet officers whose duty for the time being may compel them to report the offender, or by officers of the army, are all transcribed in the delinquency book (the most interesting object ever shown to visitors at the Point), and published to the battalion, after parade, on the evening of the following day. The excuse for an offence, if the delinquent has any, and in some cases when he has not, is presented, in writing

and according to a prescribed form, to the commandant. Should he deny its validity, an appeal lies to the superintendent and, in extreme cases, to the Secretary of War. If the report is not removed, it is finally "registered," and the number of demerit corresponding to its grade is placed opposite as heretofore explained. Should the importance of the offence seem to merit further punishment, it is inflicted by order of the superintendent.

I have preserved, and will reproduce from my diary, a list of the delinquents and their offences, published one evening soon after we had gone into winter quarters. The visitor to West Point can hear this evening, and every evening until the dissolution of the Union, the same formula of delinquencies published with little variation. But these names, or most of them, have passed away, and the Military Academy will know them, alas! no more forever.

No more popular speaker ever addressed an American audience than our Cadet Adjutant — if the undivided attention of his listeners were any criterion — when enumerating our military faults. His clear shrill voice is still ringing in my ears, and two hundred and twenty armed men were incorporeally suspended from his lips as he said, —

"DELINQUENCIES FOR —TH SEPTEMBER, 18—.

BENDER: — Inattention at drill, P. M.

SAME: — Laughing in ranks at same.

BONNETT: — Highly unsoldierlike conduct, sitting down while on post as sentinel, 9:20 P. M.

SAME: — Coat unbuttoned and hat off at same.

SAME: — Book in possession at same.

BEDLAM: — Orderly, allowing loud talking in quarters after Taps.

SAME: — Ungentlemanly conduct, throwing a piece of bread at another cadet in mess-hall, at supper.

BACHBEITER: —Neglect of duty as file closer, not reporting files for talking in ranks at parade.

BUTTLER: — Bottle of liquor in possession, 11 and 12, P. M.

BLOWER: — No light in quarters at inspection by sentinel, 7 P. M.

BEAUTÉ: — Collar not neatly put on, and belts dirty at inspection of guard detail.

SAME: — Shoes not properly blacked at same.

BUCKETT: — Wash-bowl not inverted at morning inspection.

CRUPER: — Cap out of uniform at parade of riding platoon.

CONGEE: — Absent from quarters without leave, and more than half an hour, 7 and 8 P. M.

DULBREIN: — Neglect of mathematical studies on 2d.

SAME: — The same in French on the 3d.

DICKIE: — Out of uniform, wearing a standing collar, 8 A. M.

HOPPER: — Losing step, and thereby creating confusion in ranks, marching in from parade.

KNICKOTINE: — Pipe in possession, 8½ A. M.

LINER: — Not keeping dressed while marching in review at guard-mounting.

LEGGETT: — Marching at double quick time, without command, returning from academy, 3 P. M.

LEAR: — Not keeping eyes to the front at breakfast roll-call.

PIL-GARLIC: — Hair too long at inspection, A. M.

SAME: — Not neatly shaved at same.

PARLEY: — Talking in ranks while marching from dinner.

PYRET: — Using profane language in area of barracks, 7:50 A. M.

PILLSBURY: — Positive and wilful disobedience of orders, not taking the medicine prescribed by the surgeon.

RANKANFILE: — Visiting, 11½ A. M.

SAME: — Unsoldierlike conduct, concealing himself in the fireplace to evade the officer of the day at same.

TOMBEY: — Gross carelessness, dropping his musket at drill.

TRIM: — Corporal of the guard not answering promptly the call of sentinel No. 4, while battalion was at dinner.

WESCOTT: — Out of quarters with coat unbuttoned, 11 and 12 A. M.

ZERÔT: — Neglect of French studies on 3d."

To review some of these offences, for which, or similar ones, we were some of us every day reported, we perceive that Cadet Bonnett is indeed in trouble, for there's evidently no excuse for him. The plea of sickness or exhaustion will be unavailing since, in that case, he could have called the corporal, been relieved from duty, and gone to the hospital. He will be favored with a liberal number of demerit for each of the three reports, and will have a comfortable time of it, if

he has a taste for that kind of exercise, in walking extra "Saturdays" for the next three months. Mr. Knickotine will lose his splendid meerschaum, get half a dozen demerit, and perhaps two "Sundays." Mr. Congee, as he is a cadet officer, will be punished, besides receiving six or eight demerit, by having his *chevrons* taken off. He will go into ranks again as a private, much to the secret satisfaction, perhaps, of those, myself included, toward whom he has heretofore done his military duty rather too well. But we of the fourth class had been in the habit of looking up to officers of the first class with that degree of awe and veneration, that we thought it sacrilege to see him sent into ranks side by side with us, and the sleeves of his coat as bare of gold lace as ours. The plebes of our company, of which he was a member, and I with the rest, agreed to do in turn all his guard duty if the orderly sergeant would risk the chances of its coming to the knowledge of the commandant, and enlist in our cause so far as to permit it. But the sergeant did not propose to lay himself liable not only to the same fate with Cadet-Lieutenant Congee, but what was more important than such a misfortune now, the prospect of losing his chance for promotion in his first-class year when he should attain to it. It is but

just to say, however, that it is by no means probable Cadet C. would have accepted anything further than a verbal expression of our sympathy.

It is to be hoped that Cadet Pillsbury will show in his excuse some palliating circumstances; for otherwise it will require stronger medicine than that he threw away to save him. Physicians in *civil* life are not generally over-indulgent under circumstances like these, and it is too much to expect that an *army* surgeon, whose prescription was backed by all the military power of the Government, would write a favorable and relenting indorsement on Pillsbury's excuse, whatever it might be. This case, as good luck would have it, turned out to be one not for a military tribunal, but for casuists. After P., being interrogated, had confessed to the surgeon that he had not taken the medicine, (a couple of powders, nothing more and nothing less,) and had been reported for it, his room-mate quietly informed him of the mistake he was laboring under; for he had unknowingly taken them as the victim of a practical joke played by informant. The medicine was doing its duty on the digestive organs of the accused even though against his will, and, under those circumstances, what was to be his punishment for not taking it? The Attorney-

General has not yet decided, and P. in the mean time, escaped unscathed and has never suffered from the dyspepsia since.

Mr. Buttler — there's no hope for him. He was caught just as he was creeping up-stairs on his return from "Benny's," and was ordered into arrest on the spot. He will be tried by a court-martial and, as the proof is conclusive and the regulations on this point very explicit and otherwise similar to those of the Medes and Persians, will be dismissed. The punishments of the others will be lighter.

These my predictions all proved correct, as the archives of the institution will show, except in the case of Cadet Buttler where I was much too fast. It appeared afterward that Buttler had entertained a hearty antipathy against the officer who commanded that company, and sought some method of annoying him; which by the way was rather an unequal game. He lived with one, not a classmate, who was a cadet officer and they were permitted to have a light after taps. It was between eleven and twelve o'clock on the night in question, and they had not yet retired, when the still night-inspection was faintly heard on the lower floor. Buttler had a junk bottle full of oxalic acid that he used for cleaning his cap trimmings. He immediately

threw on his overcoat and forage cap, ran out into the hall and made a slight noise on the stairs as of one stealthily and hastily ascending, and then returned to the room and seized the bottle. The officer's ready ear had detected the noise, and he immediately passed by two of the rooms on the second floor and ran up the next flight of stairs. When he opened Buttler's door the room-mate of the latter was just in the act of setting two tumblers upon the table while Buttler himself was drawing the cork, being still in cap and overcoat. Their apparent consternation at this sudden interruption was perfect, and so too was the air of triumphant severity with which the officer remarked that Mr. Buttler might consider himself in arrest, and then walked out taking along the bottle of acid. He finished the inspection and then retired to his own quarters. It so happened that he was to be absent during the entire next day and as he now had but a short night, at best, for sleep, he went to bed without once thinking — a lasting monument to his sobriety — to examine the contents of the bottle. The next morning he sent in a report of what he had done, to the commandant, and departed; and it was not until after his return, on the following evening, when the report had been already published, that he tested the value of his prize.

There was at the time of this seizure another cadet concealed in the room, and it finally turned out that Buttler's sudden expedient was not, after all, an entirely extemporaneous affair, and that his dislike to the inspecting officer had not now been his only motive. The occupant of the room directly beneath had run the risk of paying his friends overhead a nocturnal visit, and they had just been discussing the probabilities of an inspection, when the footsteps were heard in the hall below. They had already, though only half in earnest, mentioned the possibility of diverting the officer's attention by stratagem, should he have progressed so far in his inspection before being heard, that the visitor could not safely return to his room ere the inspector approached it. The plan they had named worked charmingly. For the officer, now that he was on the third floor, completed the inspection of that, as well as the fourth, before he returned to inspect the two rooms he had omitted on the second. When the way was all clear the delinquent crept back to his quarters, and when the officer returned thither, was in bed and in a wonderfully profound slumber.

As there is something in that list of delinquencies I have copied that refers pointedly to the writer of this Journal, he was not a wholly

disinterested listener to their publication. I was not taken at all by surprise when the first report was read, but had not anticipated the second. For, however remote from pride may have been my feelings when detected in that hiding-place with my head up the chimney, I did not imagine it would be deemed dishonorable to attempt the avoidance of the enemy by such discretion. My ears were regaled with the expression of the superintendent's opinion on this subject, when, at the end of the following week, the "list of cadets for punishment" was published and a handsome compliment was paid to Cadet Rankanfile's trustworthy vigilance as sentinel, he being assigned to a much greater amount of guard duty than fell to the lot of those other cadets who were less reliable in that important duty. At the time of the offence I had stepped for a moment into another room, on the same floor with my own, and occupied by a classmate, when I heard the rattle of the officer of the day's sword as he ascended the stairs. The standing fireboard, which was required to lie flat on the hearth, and the evident confusion of my friend, betrayed me.

I had succeeded in getting out of camp with only eighteen demerit, but here were ten more. These, with eight others I had received for

"glove torn at inspection," "floor not cleanly swept," and other reports concerning the police of my quarters, had given me as I thought rather too fair a start, in the *two hundred* race, in less than two months. "Troubles never come double at West Point," said Harry, in this connection; and sure enough my double report on the occasion of this unlucky visit was not the last of it. When I wrote an excuse for the second offence, I audaciously, but as gently as I could, hinted an opinion that the inspecting officer had refined undignifiedly upon his duty in thus peering into "corners" (I wonder if the commandant thought this term expressed fireplace that somehow or other I didn't wish to name) for those who were entitled to be considered as gentlemen. All the result of this was a report for "writing a highly improper excuse," which gave me six demerit and one "Sunday." I then wrote another, disclaiming all intention of disrespect toward my superior officer, and must needs date it incorrectly; for which I was reported again, and thus did I pay the last instalment for an unprofitable whistle.

But I was much better off than some others who had already received fifty or more. Strange as it may and did seem, my friend Tom, who always made every endeavor to be on the safe

side, had received nearly as many as I. Almost every one of them, however, was the result of undeniable misfortune, and many were even due to my own neglect. An instance of the latter occurs to me now. I was, one morning, half asleep preparing to go down to *reveillé* roll-call, and in my haste had unwittingly thrown some bedclothes on Tom's forage cap. He searched for it in vain, and without thinking of his dress cap which would have been more appropriate than none at all, he rushed down the stairs without either; for no poor consideration like this could ever keep him from his duty. But he had spent, in his fruitless search, too many of the few spare moments, and there was hardly time for him to get into ranks before the drums should cease beating, even had he succeeded, as he attempted to do, in descending three flights of stairs at as many bounds. He made a misstep and falling headlong received somewhat of a bruise, tore his trousers slightly, and burst off one of the centre row of coat buttons, besides, — more important to him than all the rest — being delayed by the accident. The poor fellow came hurriedly into ranks in this wretched plight just in season to avoid an "absent" but not a "late." The file closer behind us did not render himself liable to a "neglect of duty" for not

reporting him as late, and the orderly sergeant, who was calling the roll, was not less prompt to notice the partly unbuttoned coat, the soiled trousers, and much more the gross breach of discipline in appearing in ranks without a cap; and Tom was accordingly reported the next evening for all these offences.

Now he might, no doubt, have had them every one removed by the commandant, had his pride (which ought rather to have induced the contrary action) not prevented his presenting excuses setting forth the circumstances of the case. When I had advised him to that effect, he said he was unwilling to acknowledge the unmilitary feat of tumbling down-stairs, and that had his cap been hanging in the place prescribed by the regulations it would not have been covered by a blanket; all of which reminded him that "by gun, there's nothing like being on the safe side."

The mischief occasioned by that unfortunate cap thus finished with him but not with me. I had fallen into ranks in ample season at that roll-call and, as we stood facing the barracks, saw the tardy Tom bounding down the outer steps. He wore that expression of countenance which the reader who has ever been a cadet will readily recall as being peculiar to a fourth-

class man under such circumstances. Now although I would have willingly suffered this misfortune rather than have seen him suffer it, his appearance was too ridiculous for my untrained gravity, and, as I was unable to suppress an ample smile, Cadet Rankanfile figured again on the delinquency book for "laughing in ranks at *reveillé*." I knew nothing, at that moment, of Tom's fall, nor did I yet know that my carelessness was the cause of the whole affair; but even if I had, it would have been all the same as regards that unfortunate smile. We were sitting the next evening, after call to quarters, at our iron table when, before commencing study, I took occasion to refer to these reports. And it seemed to me that had I been the veriest devil (excuse the word) in action, and the veriest saint in reflection, I could never forgive the Parcæan Hags into whose meshes I had, as it had for the last few days seemed, so inextricably fallen. Like others I saw in such cases one whole side of the question, nothing more, certainly, and spoke now of the sergeant as a scoundrel to report such a trivial offence as my last, and a candidate, had I the *physique* of Tom, for unofficial attention. Tom said he regretted having been the cause (only think of it!) of my present unhappiness. He said not

one word, however, of his own ill luck, except that he thought, when he was returning from *reveillé* roll-call that morning, how much better it would be, did we live on the ground-floor.

I wish this might have been the only instance wherein he suffered by my remissness. The occupants of the same room were required to alternate weekly in performing the duties of "orderly" who was responsible for the police of the quarters. Tom never used tobacco, but I was more fond of my pipe than of my algebra. One day when he was orderly it happened that I had learned my lesson in English studies, and was enjoying a comfortable smoke, before the bugle should call us to recitation. Unmindful of the hour, I heard the signal some ten minutes before I expected it. Tom immediately started for the class parade while I, having to arrange my dress somewhat, hastened to do so; and though I thought to leave the window and door open that he might not in any case be reported for "odor of tobacco smoke" in the room, yet strange to say I left in my haste the offending weed and pipe in full view. All the probable inspections for that day, it is true, had already been made, but under these circumstances there would *naturally* be an official call, in our absence, and this

case didn't violate nature. We were accounted for by the "Hours of Recitation" posted on our door, but the tobacco and my elegant and costly pipe were captured and, doubtless, in a council of war composed entirely of infantry officers, duly confiscated. A glance at the orderly board had told who was to be held responsible, and Tom accordingly suffered the consequences. Two days afterwards I went to the commandant and, stating the circumstances, asked that this report and its consequences might be transferred to myself; as the articles were mine alone and were never used by my room-mate at all. That officer admitted that I had done the duty of a man in thus acknowledging the offence, but he said the regulations were explicit, and as I had not been detected in using the articles — in which case both of us would have been reported — the responsibility must rest on the orderly who had allowed them in his room. The commandant performed the letter of his duty, but he knew as well as did I that nothing less than a mean spirit in my room-mate would ever lead him to forbid me, during his tour of orderly duty, to smoke with the exercise of a proper degree of caution, notwithstanding he might run some risk thereby. At all events he knew that he who was guilty

of that selfishness would have such a reputation among his comrades.

This old regulation, prohibiting the use of tobacco, and which was the source of more demerit and punishment, perhaps, than any other, will, I trust, before these pages meet the light of the public countenance, be wisely altered, to permit it under proper restrictions. I say *wisely* although there is very little doubt that in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases in every thousand the indulgence is injurious to the health, however much, under the influence of a good cigar, we may sometimes flatter ourselves to the contrary. Under the proposed regulation, cadets will be allowed to smoke moderately; and the tobacco they might then be permitted to receive from the sutler would be of a good quality. As it was, in our day, a powerful temptation always existed for those whose supply was exhausted, to risk an expedition across the government lines for the sole purpose of replenishing it. Thus much of daily temptation would, under the rule proposed, be in great measure removed. Moreover, I feel safe in asserting that under the old regulation there were not less consumers, nor less consumption, than under the new; notwithstanding the hazards that attended it, and the frequent de-

tection, so strong is the force of this habit when once formed.

I may here also mention another salutary change in the regulations that has been or is to be adopted; which is to allow a superior limit of one hundred and fifty demerit to the members of the lowest class during their first six months. This is because of their being less conversant with all the requirements of their duty, and less able to avoid an excess of demerit than cadets of longer standing.

Again, the number of demerit for each of the higher grades of offences is proposed to be decreased for all the classes. However grateful this change may be to those who desire to graduate without undergoing the full rigor of the old discipline, I am strongly inclined to doubt its expediency. One reason is that when one such concession is made others will the more easily follow. And none can deny that, since the establishment of the institution, not one cadet, who has shown evidences of constant, or even habitual, attention to his whole duty, has ever been dismissed for, I will not say misconduct, but an excess of demerit. If this be so, the fault would seem to be somewhere besides in the regulations. In regard to academic merit it is otherwise; for there we

ever see those who, careful it may be to observe the rules and avoid demerit, yet fail at the examinations; whether from general inability for mental application, or from want of a natural aptitude to some particular subject in which they are found deficient. But such failure evidently involves no disgrace, where every effort has been made to avert it. How often have we seen young men with fine talents for music, painting, and literature, who could hardly be taught the demonstration of a simple proposition in plane geometry, or to solve an ordinary equation of the second degree! An illustration of this truth, remarkable only in degree, once came within my own observation. Having met a former classmate who had been, five years before, declared deficient on the simplest of our mathematics, and who now was famous for his business capacity, and apparently on the highway to an immense fortune.

"How is it," I inquired, "that Nature, when acting as your agent while you were at West Point, seemed to have forgotten something that she has since gone back to fetch?"

"You do the old dame great injustice, Dick," he replied; "Nature never changes, except it be the muscles of her face. She gave loco-

motion to a favorite pair of compasses, and called the mathematical biped Richard Rank-anfile; but left me a poor weather-glass of the financial horizon. She taught me to put my hand in my neighbor's pocket and take his gold, and the world, seeing *me* in the act, applauds; but she has never yet unlocked for me that West Point mystery of the inscribed polygon."

But the circular letter of the Secretary of War says that, this being an institution maintained by Government, and to the benefits of which all are equally entitled, "those who cannot or will not endure the rigors of the course should make room for those who can and will." Why should this not apply equally well to the subject of demerit as the term is understood at the Military Academy?

It is fortunate that the same disposition of mind and habits of attentive application that lead one to high attainments in the various departments of study, teach him a proper circumspection in his military duties. Those, therefore, who are discharged for deficiency in conduct are likely to be, or have simultaneously been, declared so in studies. There are, however, many exceptions to this rule.

The regulation that provides for the appoint-

ment of cadet officers who exercise, under certain circumstances, a surveillance over their companions is, for the discipline of the corps, a remarkably perfect one; though, on other accounts, liable to an objection. A few members of the first, or graduating class, most distinguished for correct deportment and military bearing, are appointed to act as commissioned officers, while the non-commissioned are selected in like manner from the second and third classes. One of the objections above referred to is, that the cadet officer is thus made to act the part of a superior toward another who, whether he be a private of a higher, his own, or a lower class, may be his superior in scholarship, or his superior in everything, except perhaps a military front, and not always inferior in this. A perfect submission to lawful authority is said to be, and rightly, the first lesson of the soldier as well as of the good citizen; and as long as no other mode suggests itself of effecting this among cadets, the present must suffice. Another objection is that too often little jealousies and private resentments prevent an impartial and conscientious discharge of official duty on the part of these cadet officers, and the result is, sometimes, bitter and lasting feuds. The only palliative for

this defect, if it be a defect at all, is (and no doubt it is skilfully and effectively applied) the most perfect and constant scrutiny on the part of those army officers to whom the cadet officers are subordinate.

I will close this discussion with a reference to the effect this subject of demerit is made to have in the determination of the class rank of graduates. The final arrangement of the graduating class in order of general merit is determined by a careful and accurate consideration of relative proficiency in all the studies of the entire course as well as their deportment, both moral and military, during that series of years. These studies have a relative value in this computation; as, for instance, engineering, philosophy, (natural and experimental,) or mathematics, count three each in the scale, wherein chemistry, ethics, or infantry tactics count one and a half, while French, drawing, geology, etc., count but one. But the point I am now aiming at is, that the graduating merit in conduct is determined from the demerit list as I have explained it, and is not only made equal in value to the highest branch of study, but, as it extends through the whole course, it is in reality worth more to him who shows a good account therein than the most important of them all. I shall not attempt to show that there can be more

than one opinion on the subject of good conduct, as the expression is generally understood, or that any excellence, however splendid in scientific attainments, can compensate for a blemish here. But when we reflect that the moral deportment of a cadet may be unexceptionable, and still, from a recurrence of some of the most important reports I have enumerated, his demerit list may be swelled beyond the limits of a "good conduct" roll; when we reflect, I say, that such an one must make room, in the final assignment to duty, for one who is much his inferior in natural capacity and academic excellence, but who is more fortunate in the other particular, it seems that these things are susceptible of a change "without manifest injury to the service." A late president of the United States once said, while in office, that the fact of an unlucky spot being found on the white trousers of a cadet who has a good capacity, will hardly affect his efficiency in building a fortification, testing a piece of ordnance, or charging the enemy in battle. True, these offences, the spotted trousers, the soiled gloves, the confused police of room, the levity while on duty, can none of them be overlooked. Perfect discipline and the formation of precise habits of order require that they be punished; but must such delinquency be necessarily charged to the ac-

count of the intellect? "But what," you say angrily, (for you are, perhaps, the very one that has looked at this subject in all its ordinary *phases*, and even concocted a total *eclipse* and looked at it that way,) "what the —— will you do?" And here is exactly where I am caught in the old adage that a young lieutenant from the depths of the forest may raise a question of reform that a thousand courts of inquiry, and a question of tactics that as many councils of war, could never answer. Older men than I, have, by indefatigable industry and under the authority of the War Department, brought this whole system of instruction to its present degree of perfection. It is for such rather than for me to suggest the means of obviating this imperfection, should they acknowledge it to be such.

The present is said to be the most effectual method of punishing carelessness and keeping the cadet's attention fixed on the final object to be obtained by the long and arduous course. I shall not *advise*, for it would embarrass me to think that the War Department or the Military Academy were coming to these pages to seek counsel, but will here record one of many suggestions that have from time to time been made in connection with this subject. It is to make some local and immediate disadvantages

the penalty of every ten or twenty demerit received, and to fix the semiannual limit at such a number that, by a sufficiently strict attention to duty on the part of the cadet, and a careful examination by the authorities of each registered report, the limit need not be passed. Let it be perfectly understood (perhaps such is the case at present) in the corps that the penalty of exceeding that number is expulsion without hope of favor, — a prompt and irrevocable expulsion. The effect of moral or military misconduct going no farther in the day of diploma presentation, genius would take its accustomed seat. Thus would he whose attainments were greatest be rewarded by an assignment to congenial duties where close mental application is the business of each day, while another less studiously inclined would be employed in more active service.

"Tom," said I one day when we were looking over the official register of the past year, "what do you think of this demerit system as regards its effect upon class rank?"

"Oh, I suppose it's the best, all things considered, that can be devised; but I was thinking that had my cap crawled under the bed again this morning, or had I tumbled down the stairs and burst off another button, that 'extra' I happened to work out to-day in the mathematical

academy would do me little good, and a few more similar days would show me, in the next register, to be on the high road to a lunatic asylum — by gun!"

We will draw a veil over this fit of passion, for it was something unusual in Tom, and a few minutes sufficed to make him regret such a gross, though indirect, violation of the alien and sedition laws of soldierly subordination.

* * * * * * * *

My messmate, Dr. Rhacke, the surgeon of this post, who has been informally introduced to the reader, here calls himself before the curtain to remonstrate against what he styles a dastardly attempt to make a Telemachus and a Penelope of the Secretary of War and of the Military Academy, respectively.

I repel the insinuation with scorn. But he proceeds unblushingly to say that this attempt on my part to assume the character of a Mentor for the salvation of the country, is only in fulfilment of the proverb which saith: "The meddler letteth not *well enough* alone, and in a multitude of safety there is much counsel." And he closes his unprofitable harangue with the irrelevant story of his young friend who went to Washington to hear the debates in Congress on the Missouri Compromise: —

"How were you pleased?" inquired the Doctor, on his friend's return.

"Oh, very, very much," replied the smart young man; "it did so assure me of the safety of the Government, when I sat there and reflected that it was only the cackling of ganders that saved Rome."

CHAPTER XI.

A LABYRINTH OF DETAIL — FOR SCHOOL-BOYS AND SCHOOL-MASTERS.

"Here comes the almanac of my true date."

Tom and myself had gone into barracks under the most favorable auspices. We were both in excellent health, which gave us a fair prospect, at least for the present, of avoiding duty at the hospital. We had both come to West Point from our own inclinations, and not unwillingly at the request and for the pleasure of friends, and, therefore, were the more ambitious of success. He was remarkably fond, and I tolerably so, of the mathematical studies we were now to pursue and in which we had, to some extent, been practised before coming to West Point. We had not such an accumulation of demerit, even after those few dark days in September that I have referred to, as to be made apprehensive of difficulty on that score, and last, but not least, we had been in constant and frequent receipt of en-

couraging letters from home. The first day within the walls of our winter quarters was spent principally in procuring from the commissary the necessary furniture which, with what we had obtained in June, was to garnish our not very extensive establishment that we hastened to put in order. The whole domestic outfit consisted of two very simple beds, two iron bedsteads, one iron table, an open clothes-press, two chairs, washstand and bowl, buckets, cocoa-nut dipper, tin candle-box, broom, two pewter lamps, and Tom's old enemy, the looking-glass.

On the evening of the 31st of August were published the orders for the commencement of recitations on the next day. Each class was divided into a convenient number of sections in each department of study; and the section marchers, or those who stood at the head of their respective sections, visited the instructors on that evening, and learned the extent of the lesson for the following day, which they communicated to the others. The studies my class were to take up first were algebra and English grammar. As we had no previous class rank, we could only commence in alphabetical order; and the fourth class was accordingly divided in that way into eight sections, of twelve and thirteen each.

The initial letter of Tom's name placed him not

far from the middle of the class, while the "R" of mine threw me into the eighth section, "the immortals" so called. I was thus beginning very near the foot of the class; and as I imagined it to be much easier for those above me to stay there than for me to rise, I feared I was laboring under a disadvantage on account of an unfortunate name. The hours for recitation in mathematics were from eight to eleven, A. M.; four of the sections attending in as many different apartments from eight till half-past nine, and the others occupying the remaining time. The instructors in mathematics were officers of the artillery and staff corps of the army, while the professor, a civilian with local military rank, passed from one section-room to another to watch the target-practice of "the young idea," and, when the occasion suited, to split a ball on the mathematical knife himself. From twelve to one, or during one of the hours between two and four, P. M., we were at recitation in English studies, which, as I have said, consisted for the present only of grammar. The recitations in this subject were heard also by officers of the army, the chaplain of the post being at the head of the department. Our whole daily academic duty consisted then only of these two recitations, besides a half hour's practice in fencing, during study hours, under the master of the

sword. The lessons were of moderate length, by no means short, nor yet very long; but the all-important thing was the accuracy of the recitation, the mark for each giving the cadet credit for what he had understood before entering the room, and not for what he might learn from the explanations of the instructor.

To explain the daily routine we had now commenced, we will start with a wild spring from a sound slumber, five o'clock, A. M., at the summons of the morning gun, and the simultaneous tap of the drums, that call us to the *reveillé* roll-call. About six minutes intervene between the time the music begins and its ceasing, which latter is the signal for the already formed companies to be called to attention, when all must be in ranks or at their posts. The roll-call occupies but one or two minutes, as the orderly sergeant of each company has committed to memory the list of names, so as to be able thus quickly to run through it. Practice has already accustomed him to notice, in the mean time, all lates, absences, and every violation of military decorum, and to observe whether the other non-commissioned officers in the line of file-closers behind the company do their duty in reporting such delinquencies. Adequate means are also employed to prevent the possibility of one cadet answering to the

name of another who may be absent. The result is transmitted through the four captains respectively, and the cadet-adjutant, to the officer of the day, who seeks the absentees, if there are any such. (The latter officer, at the end of his twenty-four hours' tour of duty, certifies in writing to the commandant that he has faithfully discharged all the duties of his office, as prescribed by the "Military Academy Regulations.") At half-past five, the cadet captains and lieutenants make an inspection of the rooms in their respective subdivisions. The police of each room must then have been completed, and everything in order. As the regulations prohibit any cadet from having "a waiter, horse, or dog," they must themselves perform all the dusting, folding of bedding, etc. Nothing now interrupts study until the drum for breakfast roll-call at seven, except the surgeon's call beaten at half-past six, when those who are sick repair to the hospital to receive the requisite medical attendance, and to be excused by the surgeon from the performance of such academic or military duty as they are, by reason of such sickness, incompetent to perform. After the breakfast roll-call, the battalion is marched by the senior cadet-captain, in column of platoons or companies, to the mess-hall, whence it returns after the lapse of about

twenty-five minutes. Guard-mounting occupies the time from half-past seven till eight o'clock, which is a season of recreation to those who are neither "marching on" guard nor "marching off."

At eight, the bugle calls to quarters, from which there is no "release" for five hours. All those sections of every class that recite at this hour now assemble at the class-parade, where the rolls are called under the direction of the new officer of the day; and they are marched to the recitation rooms by the section-marchers, who report to the instructor, as they have already done to the officer of the day, the result of the roll-call. At half-past nine, the bugle recalls these, and summons the other half of the entire corps to the class-parade. These return at eleven, and then the recitations in all the most important studies of the institution are finished for the day. During the remainder of the academic day, the recitations occupy but one hour. The signal for dinner roll-call is beaten at one, P. M.; and an hour is allowed for dinner and recreation. At two, the recitations begin again, and at four the academic building is deserted. There is now a long release from quarters; drill occupies about one and a half hours, a season of recreation ensues, and dress-parade takes place at sundown.

Supper succeeds, (this plague of my literary life, Dr. Rhacke, whispers that supper *always* succeeds,) which being followed by thirty minutes of recreation, the bugle again calls to quarters and study. Tattoo is beaten at half-past nine, and at ten the taps, when — the beds having been spread since tattoo — lights are extinguished, and all cadets in bed, except the cadet officers who inspect the rooms to see that this regulation has been promptly observed.

The guard, being of the same strength, and divided into the same number of reliefs as when in camp, walk post only while the battalion is absent at meals, drill, or parade, and during the hours of evening study. Each sentinel makes an inspection of all the rooms on his post, and is held responsible for all noise and absence from quarters of those who are under his temporary supervision.

This daily routine varies in no important particular during the academic year, but the studies of each class as they are successively finished are exchanged for others. Other military exercises at certain seasons of the year take the place of infantry drill, and during the winter there is no drill at all except the cavalry exercise in the riding-hall in study hours.

The hour for retiring is, while in barracks,

always the same; but *reveillé* sounds at half-past five during the months of March and October, and at six during the winter months and November.

The recitations in the section-room are conducted with the same degree of formality and precision that characterizes the other duties of the day, but not to the prejudice of an unrestrained interchange of opinions between the instructor and the cadet, on all the points of the subject under consideration. After the report of the section-marcher, and when each has taken the particular seat that belongs to him, a number of cadets, say three, four, or five, are successively sent to the board. Each as he is called takes his position in the centre of the floor, faces the instructor, assumes the position of the soldier, receives the enunciation of his proposition, and then turning to the black-board writes his name at the top and begins his work. While they are thus occupied with the chalk, another is called upon the floor, and questioned in the lesson of this or the previous day. This one is, on the succeeding days, called on "demonstration," and not again on "questions" until every other member has been in like manner questioned. Each of those at the board, when ready, takes the pointing-stick, faces about, and stands erect,

holding the pointer in the hand nearest the board. When called upon to recite, he states what he is required to do and proceeds to the demonstration, or declares his inability to perform it; in which latter case he is rewarded with a "That's sufficient, Sir," and makes room for another. The merit of each recitation is registered in accordance with a scale of marks ranging from zero, in the case of total failure, to three, which is the maximum. So accurately is this record intended to be kept, that it varies by single tenths with every shade of error. The marks for each week are posted, on the following Monday, in a conspicuous place where they can be seen by all concerned. It is from the average of these marks, combined with his success at the examination, that the standing of each cadet in January or June is determined.

I recall here the first offence of any importance I ever committed in the section-room, and the first academic delinquency for which I was ever reported. We were at recitation in algebra one morning, as usual, and some one was demonstrating his proposition, while another, at a board on the opposite side of the room from the first, appeared to be having some difficulty with his task, and intimated as much to me, secretly, while the instructor was engaged with the reci-

tation of the other. I saw where the trouble was, and while pretending as much as possible a deep interest in the cadet who was talking, succeeded in obtaining a bit of chalk, and wrote and erased successively the words, "Find val' of x in last eq'n & sub' in 2d." He comprehended, made the substitution, deduced the correct result, and when called upon made an apparently unexceptionable *max.* Now although we were both guilty of deception, and of evident injustice to others of the section who were competing with this cadet for the ascendancy, yet we felt perfectly easy in our minds, as many others however conscientious would do under the same circumstances; — he because by a hairbreadth escape he had exchanged the prospect of a zero for an undoubted triumph, and I because I had been able to assist him in his perplexity. But *perhaps* the instructor who had been for years occupied in surveys and scouts in the Indian country, had been rendered obtuse by such employment. Perhaps he had foiled the red man of the forest to be now, in his turn, sent wool-gathering by the cunning of a couple of plebes in the section-room. Whether or not this was true, *we* believed it, and were surprised afterward to find that *he* didn't. Next evening at publication of delinquencies we were greeted with: —

"Rankanfile: Rendering assistance to another member of section in mathematical academy, nine and a half and eleven A. M.

"W——: Receiving assistance from another member of section while at the board in same academy at same.

"Same: Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, attempting to deceive his instructor in regard to his proficiency, by means of such assistance at same."

The natural consequence of all this was an array of demerit, and an amount of confinement and extra duty, which W., whose punishment was much greater than mine, acknowledged to be, if not very dazzling, at least quite effective. Besides this, he found afterward that his *max* had mysteriously changed to what in the cadet dialect is known as a "frigid zero," — an O! more expressive than the whole remaining list of interjections. It is almost unnecessary to add that we were strict thereafter in our observance of section-room etiquette, as long as we were under the same instructor, though we never could discover in his conduct toward us whether or not he ever thought of this circumstance afterward. I labored untiringly with the commandant on the subject of the injustice that was done me, who was only guilty of a generous act. He didn't

seem to see the force of my argument, so we parted.

Tom acknowledged that he would have acted, under the same circumstances, exactly as I had done, but yet took sides against me as far as the real importance of the offence was concerned. I did not, however, give him full credit for his sincerity till some time afterward, when a member of his own section sought an opportunity to give him a significant nod on a similar occasion, and he shook his head in rejection of the proffered aid.

"To say nothing of common honesty," said he, in reply to my question why, "you would have me put in the hand of my rival or my future enemy a weapon more powerful than time itself."

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I had hoped that the nature of this chapter would disarm the criticism of even my tor-Mentor, Dr. Rhacke. It comes in new guise now; for he solemnly declares that almost every word of this elaborate article may be found in a letter that, when ten years of age, he wrote to his mother from Mistress Burchyheather's grammar-school.

CHAPTER XII.

THE JANUARY EXAMINATION — AND HARRY.

"The clock upbraids me with the waste of time."

The first Monday in September was one of the most exciting eras in fourth-class cadet life. We had no sooner broken ranks, after marching from dinner on that day, than we made such a "break" from the parade-ground as is known only on such an occasion. The court of the barrack would not have been more promptly cleared of my classmates, had an aerolitic shower descended that moment upon it, or a cry of fire been raised at the library building. Away we went, a hundred horizontal coat-tails disappearing around the corner with a rapidity which, if it did not assist the digestion of an enormous dinner, at least afforded a great deal of amusement to those of the higher classes who, by no means disinterested themselves, but with more dignity, followed us. (I called it dignity, — the proper term would be exclusiveness; for had we con-

cluded to walk, they would doubtless have run as fast as we did.)

The cause of this excitement was that the marks of the preceding week were posted in the hall of the library. Not one of us but expected to see in these marks an index of his future success. I had "been up" three times during the week, and had perfectly, as I thought, understood the several subjects I had been required to discuss; and I therefore felt confident of seeing a total of nine opposite my name, in other words that I had "maxed it for the week." What was my surprise, therefore, when I found the result of the three recitations only six and eight tenths, an average of not quite *two — three.* As for Tom, whom I knew to be perfectly conversant with everything we had yet been over, he was more unfortunate in his mark than even myself. He could not avoid a betrayal in the look of disappointment with which he examined the list, but he never, even to me, acknowledged any surprise, and had the effrontery to say the result was better than he had reason to expect. His conduct on such occasions savored of a slight degree of affectation; but if there was such a spot on his sincerity, inasmuch as it never appeared except in such expressions of

self-condemnation as this, I always thought it rather an ornament than a blemish.

There were very few of our class who had received what might be called an excellent mark, and those, as it afterward proved, were such as had a peculiar power of showing to advantage all the knowledge they possessed, and of gaining credit by a brilliant fluency in recitation for even more than they really comprehended. But these were not long in finding their level in the subsequent sifting process, and the very person who now had the highest mark found that level ultimately in a verdict of deficiency.

Some of us were dispirited by this official statement of our merits, and were ready to declare our case almost hopeless. "If I am thus unsuccessful," thought I, "at the commencement of the course where everything is comparatively familiar, what can I expect in the future, when we have advanced to the consideration of new and difficult subjects, of whose names even I have never perhaps heard?" It was the same question that is always asked by those who do not reflect that in whatever course of study a close application, as we progress step by step, prepares the mind for comprehending all that in regular gradation succeeds. Even

our Herculean professor, who could shoulder the mathematical Bull without an effort, had watched his daily growth and had a severe and doubtful struggle with the Calf when he first essayed to count his own fingers.

The marks of the succeeding weeks were more satisfactory. During the fourth week I lost but a single tenth in five recitations, and would not have exchanged positions with any prince upon earth, (and an outside principality "to boot," as Tom would say,) when on Saturday evening of the fifth, I, with two others, was transferred, in "Orders," from the *immortals* to the first section, clearing at a bound the intermediate six. Our places were filled by three others from the first section, who would not have been sent down so suddenly and so far had it not already appeared too evident that they would not survive the January examination. One had received at least eleven zeros in these five weeks, and the average of the most successful of the three had been about seven tenths of unity. The transfer, however, in nowise prevented their rising again, gradually, should they afterward merit it. There were some also who now changed in other pairs of sections, but Tom's name was not mentioned. I regretted this the more as I could attribute

my own good fortune to no cause so powerful as the fact that he was my room-mate.

Hardly a Saturday now, for two months, passed but brought with the evening parade orders for transfers among us (and some in the other classes), until in December the class had been pretty thoroughly sifted; though of course there yet existed a few latent and scattering diamonds in the lower sections whose more impure carbon had not yet been rubbed off. Those who were careless, indolent, or incapable of study, had been gradually removed from the upper sections; while the industrious and successful were slowly and surely disentangling themselves from the dangerous ground of the lower. The end of December found Tom in the second section to which he had been transferred step by step, for he had only risen a single section at a time. The reason was that, notwithstanding his clear head and eminently mathematical mind, he had not such a manner on the floor of the section-room as would lead an instructor to give him the full credit that he deserved. Still he was one whose final success was as certain as it was slow.

I have been speaking exclusively of our progress in mathematics, which was somewhat at variance with that in English studies; but Tom

and myself were so fortunate as to reach the first section in the latter, some time in the month of November. After finishing the subject of English grammar in this department we had taken up that of rhetoric, and this was to be followed, before January, by some attention to geography. On the two former and algebra we were to be examined.

The first two weeks in January were occupied in the semiannual examination by the Academic Board, which was nearly the same in its composition (about five parts of what may be called the *civic* to four of the *military*) as the one before which we were examined previous to admission. As our class was to suffer most in this encounter, and in order that the rejected ones might be able to get away as soon as possible, we were examined first. The ball was accordingly opened by the officer of the day, as at nine A. M. on the morning of January second, he passed from one division of the barracks to another with, "First section — fourth class — mathematics, — turn out;" in obedience to which we were paraded, inspected, and marched to the examination hall in the academic building. The result, in this section, was that one cadet "fessed cold," on demonstration, and pocketed his zero, under the weight

of which he sank to the second section, being prevented from going farther by a previous good mark and by having "ragged" (in a scientific discussion I can be allowed to use only technical terms) on questions. Most of the others did remarkably well; only one other, and he mostly on account of his average, falling out of the section. As for myself I went to the board on Sturm's Theorem which I discussed with tolerable success, but hesitated and blundered somewhat while being questioned on logarithms; all of which, with a previous average of about *two—eight*, left me a little above the foot of the section. Tom was perfectly successful in every respect, as I learned from members of his section, but all the satisfaction I could obtain from his own lips was that he had "hesitated considerably," but he believed that he "didn't make many important mistakes."

Not one of the *immortals*, and only one of the seventh section passed, and some also of the sixth were "found." In English studies only one or two were found deficient who had not been declared so in the mathematical course.

The beginning of this new year was a pivot in Tom's history; for he seemed suddenly to

have shaken off his accustomed clumsy diffidence in academic exercises, though he retained them in some degree elsewhere. It was henceforth apparent that his was the master-mind among us, although this examination had left him some five or six files below the head of the class. He had risen above me, but I was far from feeling any jealousy on that account, as I longed to see him in the position to which his genius and application seemed to entitle him; and I was rejoiced that we were to commence the last half of the year in the same section of each department.

The names of those who had been declared deficient were immediately forwarded to Washington, and, the action of the Academic Board having been indorsed by the Secretary of War, the wiser ones departed for their homes, while the others "took post" in the four corners of this spheroidal earth. Among the latter was our old friend and tent-mate Harry F——. He had occupied the room adjoining ours, and, possessed as he was of an extensive, though somewhat superficial, knowledge of men and things, — obtained by considerable travel and a great amount of careless reading, — had been as amusing and agreeable a neighbor as tent-mate, and we had both formed a strong attachment

to him. He had been greatly assisted in his mathematics by Tom, both during release from quarters and when he, though two or three times detected in so doing, would steal into our room during evening study hours. By this means, in a great measure, he had been kept out of the two lower sections, but was one of those who were found deficient in the sixth, though he stood quite high in the other department. I think he might have remained much longer than he did, had not his mind been imbued with that fatalism, which sometimes prevents the full exercise of one's faculties for the attainment of an object to which his "star" is to lead him. Some evidences of superstition had acquired for him, among some of us who were his classmates, the *sobriquet* of "Flighty," while some old cadets, in our subdivision of barracks, used to call him "Don Plebadillo, Brevet Corporal of the Spanish Castle." I often found him smoking his pipe and reading poetry, with the greatest amount of self-complacency and good-humor, when that star, if we might judge from marks and transfers, was waning. And not unfrequently I took the liberty to suggest to him that if he did not leave poetry, and "bone math'" more than he was doing, we should be deprived erelong of his

excellent society. But his reply was always to the same effect, —

"Why, Dick Rankanfile, my dear fellow, I thank you indeed for your advice, but it so happens that I was never born to be *found* at this little military institution. You may perhaps think it childish for me to speak in this manner, but I am as fully convinced of it as though I had just received my diploma. I defy the power of any of these men to find me deficient at this examination, and on the very simple subjects we are now pursuing. When we shall have come to those more difficult branches, if I find it necessary to make greater application, I shall assuredly do so."

But poor Harry didn't find it necessary. He met his fate like a man, when his name appeared in "Pluto's list;" but he suffered as much on account of it as any of the others.

It was about the first of February when we received a letter from him, which, though eminently characteristic in its vehemence, showed a nature not devoid of much nobility of spirit and tender feeling. This was the last we have ever heard of him, and as I have his letter on file I will reproduce it as a last tribute to his memory.

"Astor House, New York,
"January 28th, 18—.

"*Mes chers Enfants, Tom et Dick.*

"I am not unaware how little interest you must naturally feel in the history of one who has been declared, by an impartial jury, unworthy to share the destiny that awaits your patient application. I have read and discoursed of the 'sober realities of life,' but never before knew what the expression meant; never till when, one week ago, I was seated in the stage on my way from the loveliest spot on American soil to —— God alone knows where.

"The letter,—I thank you for forwarding it,—was from my father, and was the first I ever received from him the perusal of which afforded me unmitigated pain. This gave the finishing stroke to my misery. There, where alone I expected to find at least some little encouragement and consolation, I have met nothing but the most bitter rebuke. He was early informed of my failure at the examination by the superintendent, and sent me in that letter a liberal supply of money for my journey home, and for such other outlays as I might wish to make; but showed the weakness, shall I say it, to reprimand me, in the severest terms, for having,

as he said, not only blasted his hopes but brought lasting disgrace on my family. As if, forsooth, I were so lost to all sense of shame and pride as not to feel that the punishment, for my neglect, of a reproving conscience is greater than I can bear. What did he think to achieve for his own or his son's benefit by such bitterness? Was he blind and unable to see that the evil was past a remedy? Had his tone been that of an affectionate and discreet parent, had he sought rather to encourage me with hope of better success in another sphere more suited to my tastes or my capacity, (though it were hoping against hope,) then might I have returned to my home, and perhaps have yet been more than an unprofitable son. God forbid that I should, without cause, be ever a thankless child — but can I acknowledge further obligation to such a parent? Never, never!

"I had simply the funds allowed me as mileage by the superintendent — and it is nearly all expended — but I rejected with scorn the ungraceful present of my father, and hesitated not to return, without comment, his letter and the remittance.

"But let us look upon another picture, for my disposition has not yet entirely lost its wonted

elasticity. There may yet well be fairer skies in my history so inauspiciously prefaced; and though I mean through life, as far as may be, to measure all my steps with the Golden Rule, I shall henceforth leave the rest to the guidance of an unerring Destiny, that, by fair wind or foul, shall drive me to the appointed rock or haven. Having failed in the attempt to become a soldier of my country, I have now enlisted as a soldier of fortune; and upon the result of the campaign depends the question of further correspondence with those who should be my friends at home.

"Ere this reaches you I shall be on the ocean; and the vessel that carries me will have turned herself back toward the Gold Coast of Africa. Whatever may be your suspicions, I have confidence in your keeping them a secret. I formed by accident the acquaintance of the captain of this vessel, and take advantage of so favorable an opportunity to leave my home, for the present, so far behind me. I seek knowledge and adventure, but shall never pollute my hands with inhuman traffic.

"The time I spent at West Point was not wholly lost, for at least that binomial theorem, the rock on which was split the frail bark of my military glory, is now as indelibly engraved on

my memory as it ever was on the tomb of its great discoverer. I have several times, since I left you, taken out my Bourdon and looked over that subject with, I imagine, hardly less interest than that displayed by the most gallant of Queen Bess's courtiers, on the scaffold, when he examined the edge of the axe that was to sever the thread of his existence, and discussed its keenness and political utility.

"A day or two since I was looking over the pages of my favorite Byron, when my eye rested on that beautiful 'Farewell to France' that he has put in the mouth of Napoleon. In an artificially gay mood, and finding in it a new interest, I read the 'January-bird's' lament:

'Oh for the precious hours that I've wasted,
In sport with my pipe ere my maxes were won,
Then the Warrant, whose benefits thus I have blasted,
Through the "Gray to the Blue" had still led me on.'

"Good-bye, boys; those pursuits which to insure your success must engross your attention will, at least, prevent you from giving me long a place in your memory. But whether I am bounding over the billows of ocean, or seeking my fortune on the *terra firma* of other and warmer climes, a melancholy sweetness will always attend the reminiscences of the days I spent with

you in that romantic mountain cloister, 'the greenest spot in memory's waste,' where as elsewhere may God's blessing attend you both.

"Your Friend,

"HARRY."

This examination was no sooner passed, and our standing published, than we renewed our studies, taking up now the subjects of plane geometry, French, and geography. The former, when finished, was succeeded by trigonometry, and that in turn by descriptive geometry. These, with algebra again, formed the mathematical course on which we were to be examined, before the Board of Visitors, at the annual examination in June. The drawing of maps from memory, showing the positions of places and boundaries, with the natural features of the country, was an important part of the recitations in geography; and this subject, with rhetoric and grammar, composed the course of English studies for the year. In the department of French, the sections were composed respectively, of the same cadets as the corresponding ones in English studies for convenience of recitation, though transfers commenced immediately; some of us being quite familiar with that language while others had never seen a French

book. Tom was among the latter, and it was only by the closest application that he could, during the first few weeks, avoid being transferred down. He was of course much troubled with the pronunciation, but seldom made any other mistakes that a diligent study of the lesson could enable him to avoid; while those who had some previous knowledge of the language were sure to neglect the grammar. During these last six months of our first year, transfers were much less frequent than before, but there were occasional changes as the higher would grow careless, or the lower more diligent. Our duties were generally of the same monotonous and busy nature as during the first part of the course, but as spring opened and we progressed toward the end of the academic year, this life was, to Tom and myself, even delightful.

The drills of this spring were those of the company and battalion in infantry; and, in artillery, the manual of the light field battery. And, as the Government never wastes any of its resources in policies of insurance, we had even an occasional drill with the fire-engine, and threw little oceans of water on the memory of the flames that, in 1838, devoured the adjutant's office with all the archives of the institution.

Soon after the late examination, we had gone through the "interesting ceremony" of taking the oath of allegiance to the United States. We then enlisted for at least eight years (unless sooner discharged) and were sworn to obey all officers over us, and to defend the said United States against all enemies or opposers whether foreign or domestic. No provision was made for a case of Disunion, and we could only hope that such a catastrophe would be deferred until the expiration of our term of enlistment; that we might avoid the embarrassment of perjury in the courts of both United States North and United States South. After this ceremony we received each a cadet warrant, which in our original appointment had been only conditional.

It was the last Saturday in May, and Tom and I had climbed to the summit of Cro' Nest and were looking thence upon one of the most magnificent pictures the hand of Nature ever painted. (It is true that we learned afterward, in our second-class course, to think that our professor of drawing could beat it, though She mixed up all her colors on the same plate just as he did;— but this is all foreign to the present subject.) I was, as I thought, descanting with irresistible eloquence, Tom being an apparently attentive auditor, upon the sublimity and beauty

of the landscape, spread out beneath us, of mountain and valley and the peerless river, as far to the north of us and southward we could trace its course bordered by highlands, villages, and populous towns, when in the midst of my enthusiasm Tom interrupted me: —

"I haven't 'crammed' descriptive at all yet. Do you s'pose there's any danger of Old Snifty's giving me that 'two cones' at examination? By gun, I'll be on the safe side and go back and bone that very thing to-night."

I suppose Tom thought Cro' Nest was the hill of science.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JUNE EXAMINATION — TOM, TERPSICHORE, AND CUPID.

"Renouncing every pleasing page
From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the lettered sage
The square of the hypothenuse."

The orders came out on the evening of the 31st of May which gave us the programme of the annual examination, the preliminaries of which were to commence on the next day. The Board of Visitors, representatives of half the whole number of States, were accordingly received with due formality on the first day of June, a review of the cadets and a salute from the field-battery forming a part of the ceremony. The regular study of our first year was ended, the uniform changed to-day from the winter gray to the summer white made the corps look young again, and with all the novelty, noise, and excitement, it was the greatest day we of the fourth class had ever seen; though an exception was found in the feelings of those who had too good

reason to predict that the coming ordeal would be to themselves fatal.

There was a very quiet feature in the scenes of this day that could not escape our attention, and was by no means the least interesting to us whose condition was thereby so sensibly affected. I refer to the occasional arrival of some young and perhaps dusty traveller, escorted to the barracks by that same big drummer I had so obsequiously entertained nearly a twelvemonth previous. There was no mistaking the countenances of these new-comers, and "a plebe," "a plebe," "a live plebe," "that's so," "hip, hip," "hurrah for Pluto," etc., etc., were the words that, as far as consistent with the quiet of study hours, were passed from mouth to mouth of my elated classmates, who now began prematurely to congratulate each other upon the accession to third-class dignity, which the arrival of these pioneers almost brought us. We never, as a class, felt such a sudden increase of pride and importance as now when our title was transferred to others and we were plebes no longer.

The excitement of the great day of the year having passed, the examination commenced, on the morning of the second, with the first class in the departments of civil and military engi-

neering. On the fourth or fifth we were brought up for the first time before that military and civil array, the civil ingredient largely predominating. Tom was called before me, and, though I was too much occupied with my own apprehensions, I could not but notice that his demonstration was the same to which he had referred, a few days since, on the top of Cro' Nest. He had wrought out one or two important extras in trigonometry, and I felt confident that he would be rewarded with one of these, and assured him that, at all events, he was sure to have nothing in descriptive geometry. His resolution taken on the top of the mountain had indeed made him "safe," though I doubt not that when he spoke on that occasion he would have been able, with at most a little reflection at the black-board, to work out every one of the many problems he had since reviewed. I was at the board when he recited on that proposition and when he was afterward questioned on all the other three subjects of the course. I knew not, therefore, how he had acquitted himself, until afterward when, as I could find out nothing from him about his own success, I asked another member of the section whether Tom had done well. The exact response was that "Old Sawmill just ragged right straight

out, from beginning to end, and he's head of the class just as true as that I fessed, perfectly frigid with a clean board, before the very faces of my father, mother, and sweetheart, and am probably found."

This reply came from a cadet who had been called on some demonstration wherein there was considerable algebraic work, but which he understood perfectly. On an important equation, which he was to assume, depended some results necessary to the perfect explanation of the subject. But this equation had escaped his memory and, for his life, he could not recall it. Had he felt that there was abundance of time he could probably have deduced instead of assuming it, but this would occupy him too long and at last bring him only to the commencement of the task assigned.

Unwilling therefore to expose himself to the censure of the Board, in doing a thing by halves, or as they would say not doing it at all, and disgusted at the thought of being thus tantalized by a treacherous and sudden freak of memory, he rubbed out his work, seized the pointer, turned on his heel with a perfect "'bout face" precision, was called upon, "I am required to show —— etc. etc.; can't do it, sir," and "that will do at the Board, Sir," settled his case in much less time

than this lame quill has spent upon it. But he did remarkably well on the floor afterward, and was questioned much more extensively than he otherwise would have been. His average, too, had been very nearly *two — nine*, so that his merit was, on the whole, greater than that of any one in the second section, and he fell therefore only to the foot of the first.

As to myself, I was exceedingly glad to get off as well as I did, but felt not very highly complimented in being required to demonstrate that proposition, in plane geometry, which has for a long time been styled the Pons Asinorum. It is a very important and beautiful demonstration, but the fact of its having been so long dignified with that title was what in great measure attracted more than ordinary attention to it; and there were very few of us who, having been once over the subject, would have failed on this demonstration that not one of us had suspected would be given out in our section. I was questioned somewhat on descriptive geometry, but principally on trigonometric formulæ, and then my fourth class mathematics was finished; and if a cheerful letter from an absent son and brother necessarily gladdens the hearts of parents and sister, the family of one Moses Rankanfile, farmer, were not at all the

more melancholy on account of the eight closely written pages that, on this evening, I addressed them.

Four or five days afterward came our examination in English studies, when I was required to draw, on the black-board, a map of Austria and all the German States, and afterward was questioned on rhetoric and on some of the statistics of our own country. During the discussion of the map I had drawn, one of the Board of Visitors expressed his regret that nature had, in one particular, inaccurately copied my sketch; for "that principal tributary of the Danube there" was, at this very moment, actually flowing in on the other side. As the Austrians were not likely to be at all incommoded by what I had done, I failed to enjoy this unfortunate destruction of the beauty of my picture, and wished, for a moment, that I myself had been a desperate tributary of the said Danube from either bank, it was immaterial which.

Our examination in French was the last or next to the last duty the Board had to perform, and they seemed little less rejoiced at the termination than did the cadets at being relieved from suspense. It was the middle of June when one evening the presentation of diplomas to the graduating class took place, and after-

ward a display of fireworks, of cadet manufacture, was made in honor of the Board of Visitors who left on the following day. To add to my pleasure at this time, the member from my own state, or in cadet parlance, my "plank," had followed my mathematical section from the examination hall to congratulate me, and to say that on his way home he would deviate from the direct route, to call upon my father and render to him in person an account of my success.

The military exercises — artillery practice at both the heavy and light batteries, infantry and cavalry drills, etc., which were probably full as interesting to the Board of Visitors as the recitations, took place toward evening of each day after the academic exercises of that day were closed; and thus their labors on the drill ground and in the examination hall were completed simultaneously. My class-mates had been so fortunate as to be spectators only, at all the military displays except battalion drill and the ordinary daily parades, unless it were the fencing exercise; for that drill, the evening parade, and this exercise were all that we as yet participated in. The academic course of the last six months had been an interesting one, and not difficult, if carefully studied from the beginning

of each subject; and those of us who had been sufficiently attentive throughout would have feared little from this examination, had it not been the first annual one at which we had yet appeared. The duties of our first year were all done now, the same scenes that I had watched from my lonely window just twelve months ago were again enacted at the departure of the furlough and graduating classes, and we were now in undisputed possession of all the immunities and dignities of the third-class man who scorns the imputation of having ever been a plebe. Another source of self-congratulation for sixteen of our number, was that we were advanced to the rank of cadet-corporal, an office we thought the stepping-stone to the most unlimited military renown.

Tom had come out head of his class not only in academic, but also in military merit, for he was made first corporal. But he seemed much less elated by these combined honors than I felt with the class rank of nine, and military rank of sixteenth (or "nth") corporal. How happy those who can pocket a large fortune, of honor or money, and not have it stick out!

Joyous were our anticipations now of the coming encampment, for the contrast between it and the preceding was infinite. I was again so lucky

as to be assigned to the same company with Tom, and we continued also to live together and had now a tent to ourselves. There was, for a few days, but little of recreation besides watching the personation of our former selves in the awkwardness of the plebes,'— what a luxury was it to use that expression with reference to those below us, — though for some time we enjoyed with a good relish, the luxury of being freed from anxiety about our studies.

Orders from Washington came, about the first of July, relieving nearly twenty of the corps who had been declared deficient, and approving the recommendation of the Board in one or two cases, where circumstances had made such lenity a matter of justice, to allow a cadet to be turned back into a lower class, and go over again the studies of the past year.

There were heavy hearts again, both among those who went and those who remained, when the hour of parting arrived; though it must be acknowledged, perhaps to our shame, that in the strife of each and all of us to avoid such a misfortune ourselves, we had, ere our cadet course was finished, nearly forgotten them all. Far otherwise was it with them; for they had now been too long here ever to forget this past year so sadly terminated, or to look back upon it

with other than a degree of interest if not of melancholy pleasure.

The first dancing-party of this, our partially recreative season, was given on the evening of the 4th of July. Tom gave me all the details of the affair, for, as my ill luck had it, I was corporal of the guard that day, and had to content myself with listening to the music from the other side of the Plain, as I stood at the guard-tents, or made the rounds to visit the sentinels under my charge. Tom had attended only as a stately wall-flower; for he had hardly ever yet spoken to a lady, other than his country neighbors at home, much less ever essayed a *pas de deux* with any of "the sect." He had, however, in the previous summer, bestowed the same amount of close attention to the art of dancing — our dancing-master claiming a place among the faculty, always insisted it was a *science* — that he always did on everything else he undertook, so that he could make a very creditable appearance in a polka or quadrille with one of us for a partner. But it changed the economy of the whole performance when it was proposed to substitute a female heart to flutter so near his own, as it would in a polka, if we consider that Tom's heart was on the right side — as it certainly was.

I was almost consoled for my absence from this

party by the diversion afforded in his description of it, which was as thorough as any mathematical demonstration I had ever heard him make. He seemed to have been completely dazzled by the array of beauty, (for that matter who ever visited West Point, where American beauties most do congregate, that wasn't?) and it was really surprising to notice how active had been his observation in this perfectly new field. He never dissected a *warped surface* more perfectly than he did now the impressions of each countenance, dress, or peculiarity of manner.

Nor did he appear at all unlike himself when I inquired how he had withstood the temptation to dance. For he said he thought it better to keep on the safe side, that was the *outside*, and feast his eyes than to venture beyond his depth and, breaking down in the midst of the dance, to beat an inglorious retreat with the consciousness of having incurred a lady's scorn and contempt. Had Tom kept his own counsels thereafter and never listened to me, he might have continued to enjoy these little reunions during the summer as a mere spectator. But who can foretell the freaks of vindictive Fortune, who, as he used to say, must be driven with a tight rein, and even then, is more than likely to kick the dasher into your face.

The next day but one after coming off this

tour of guard-duty I had to act as corporal of police, or as it would be called in civil life chief scavenger. The members of the old guard were required to do this duty of policing the camp twice: once at sunrise and again in the afternoon. It was toward evening, and I with my third of the whole police force, all armed with legitimate weapons, wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, and fingers, were slowly progressing in the purification of the camp. We had approached that part of the parade-ground where stood the tent appropriated to visitors, when one of the party, a fourth-class man, dropped upon his knees on the turf to gather a bit of paper, a piece of second-hand tobacco, and sundry other little articles for our wheelbarrow cabinet. He was thus and intently occupied, when all but he saw the approach of two young ladies who, directed by the sentinel on No. 2, came directly to where he was.

"Oh! Charlie, have you come to this?" were the first words of greeting.

"Don't disturb him at his devotions," said some older cadet *sotto voce*, who forgot that he was in the presence of ladies, but not that the poor fellow was a plebe. The victim looked up, dropped his trophies, and his irrecoverable under-jaw, and wrung his soiled hands; for there before him, all the way from Maryland, come so soon to visit

him in the romance and luxury of cadet-life, stood his sister and his — friend.

* * * * * *

After several days' reasoning and coaxing I succeeded in making Tom promise that, on the very next occasion, he would "survive or perish" in a quadrille, and perhaps, even in a polka. In order to help the project along I introduced him, one morning during guard-mounting, to a young lady who with a few others had walked down from the hotel to spend a few minutes — not of course with their cadet friends, but to see guard-mounting and hear the music — while their mammas watched them with their glasses from Rider's piazza. I was glad to notice how exceedingly well he seemed to progress in this new acquaintance, which I foresaw would do much to insure his success on the evening of the next day.

A signal from the bugle at nine o'clock bade us run to our tents, to don fatigue jackets for the artillery drill, and Tom now took occasion to "*con*-found" a uniform without pockets; and I noticed that his face was covered with a more than healthy perspiration the cause of which, as it was not a very warm morning, I need not explain. The reason of his sudden dissatisfaction with the uniform proved to be that, as we had no pockets, we carried our handkerchiefs in the breast, and he

had thought when he wished to wipe the perspiration from his brow it would be an outrageous violation of etiquette, in the presence of a lady, to unbutton two buttons of the coat and take it out.

The evening of the 22d July found us assembled at half-past eight for one and a quarter hours' pleasant recreation, and no "marriage bell" ever went half so "merry" as did my hero through the first two quadrilles and an intermediate polka, all with the same lady, the only one he knew. I then asked some one to introduce him to another one of the most lovely, in feature and figure, of all the ladies present. Emboldened by such unheard-of success, Tom was by no means backward until this last acquaintance intimated that she preferred to waltz. He was stunned, faced to the right, faced to the left, and then executed an about-face; but there was no escape. He had not dared to attempt it even with a partner he had known for two long days, and now he must succumb under circumstances infinitely more dispiriting. He nerved himself for the desperate emergency, and when the band struck up the "Prima Donna," (now I will acknowledge, for once, that this is merely for euphony's sake, as I, though delighting in music, knew hardly one tune from another, and could

not have sworn that they were not playing the Cow Bell Dirge,) away he went at "Steam Polka" speed, half drowned in perspiration and reeling with dizziness, but not without at first a tolerable success. He was rapidly gaining courage thereby when the helmsman of another couple, having steered off into an eccentric orbit, — I again take the liberty to anticipate the second-class course, — came into collision. The effect of the shock was more disastrous than even that apprehended between our devoted mother earth and the coming Judgment Comet of 1857. For Tom lost the step, and in the attempt to regain it down came one of his uniform brogans on what he would have called a mathematical point but which served the lady for a foot. The little gem of a slipper was soiled, but, strange to say, she declared to a lady friend that she cared not half so much about that as about her "bleeding" foot, which "that stupid clown had crushed."

"Oh!" thought Tom, "if I had but stationed somebody outside to cry fire in this contingency!"

The expression of his countenance which I observed at that moment would have furnished a month's subsistence to my chronic risibility, had not the result of this misfortune been so serious and embarrassing. The lady's foot was not half

so much injured as the shock led her to imagine; but she was so far deprived of her presence of mind that she could not dissemble her mortification; and therefore, leaving the stupefied cadet-corporal in the middle of the floor, she walked hurriedly toward the dressing-room, followed at a long gallop by her argus-eyed *chaperone*.

Now Tom was never, in the section-room, known to say "I can't do it, Sir;" but I have often thought how untrue it would have been, had he ever, during his course in artillery or infantry tactics, been "required to show" how a third-class corporal, participating for the first time in a *soirée dansante*, and left unsupported while manœuvring under fire of a hundred enclosing batteries of dark eyes, might effect a retreat with the least possible loss. Had he in other words been asked how he himself got off the floor in his present predicament, he would have been totally unable to explain further than he afterward did to me, when he said all he knew about it was, that he reflected, as he stood there alone, what a favor some generous friend or some big brother of that outraged lady might do him at that moment, — a favor for which he would give his commission and a life's gratitude, — by having the politeness to kick him out.

Those who, a moment later, were enjoying the

refreshing breeze in the upper porch of the building, and, when not looking at each other, were peering out into the darkness in the direction of the encampment, might have seen a tall gray and white form making from the academy to the camp a line than which a straighter never was described by mortal bee or immortal mathematician.

"Cadet-Corporal —— reports return from party 9:25, P. M." might have been heard at the tent of the officer of the guard, and if we except a restless night, that was the finale of Tom's *début* on the boards of Vanity Fair. I did not speak to him on the subject of his misfortune when, half an hour afterward, I reached the tent, for I was determined he should open the case, and I felt not a little curiosity to hear how he would do it, and in what terms he would discuss that old theme the rose and the thorn. But my curiosity was its own reward. He spoke gayly of the party without the slightest allusion to the subject that interested him most, until I referred to it the next morning. However lightly a little mishap of this kind might affect one to whom it was no uncommon occurrence, it was, for such a person as Tom a subject that received a great deal of consideration and thought. It is gratifying however to think now of how perfectly, in

spite of all I have said, the lady afterward proved to be no ordinary watering-place butterfly, painted in ephemeral colors. He had not known her more than ten minutes previous to the terrible catastrophe, but for some reason or other believed her amiability and worth, in every respect, to correspond with her ball-room loveliness.

This was an eventful evening for us both; though my own affair was of a different nature and comparatively unimportant, but similar in some respects to a former misfortune of Tom's, though in a much better cause. I had a contingent permit to accompany a lady friend, after the party, from the academy to the hotel-gate, if there should be sufficient time. Her mother and brother followed at a respectful distance, to relieve me of my charge if called away. We were yet two hundred yards from the hotel, when the last roll of the tattoo drums warned me that not a second was to be lost, and I accordingly took an abrupt leave and started at double quick for camp. I had proceeded a distance of from two feet to a yard, when we both came to a *full stop*, while our respective bodies suddenly assumed an attitude of the remainder of two interrogation points which expressed the echoed question, "What's the matter?"

The simple truth was that the fringe of her

shawl had insinuated itself about one of my coat buttons, and refused to yield. The stout thread that held the button was no less obstinate, revealing an interesting conspiracy between them. The lady, as also did her mother, urged me to take the shawl and run; but I of course could not for a moment think of leaving her thus exposed to the night air, through a journey of two hundred long yards, and all to avoid for myself a half dozen paltry demerit. So without saying another word when there was no time to talk, I slipped through my coat, which was unsupported by a vest, and to which were attached both stock and collar, and leaving them instead of a "good-night," bounded into camp, entering the line of file closers of my company just in season to be late. The immediate result of such "highly unmilitary conduct" as appearing on duty in such a plight is evident; but I frankly told the whole story in my written excuse, and the commandant, in view of all the circumstances, remitted all except the report for being late.

The next morning at eight o'clock Tom was standing near the guard-tents with another cadet, both apparently looking at guard-mounting. Half an eye could detect, however, on the part of the former, a total disregard of all the attractions

presented by that brilliant little morning parade; for there was a brighter array, a richer optical feast, canopied by flats and parasolettes, near sentinel's post No. 2. Among the number there seated, and conversing gayly with some first-class man, was Tom's murdered victim of last evening; — a keen observer might have asked who was the susceptible victim now. He wanted to see her looking at him, but she wouldn't. He wanted to speak with her and apologize for the grave offence he had committed, but he durst not.

Happily his mental agitation had at last a partial vent, when some unmilitary spectator, who was standing near, turned to him and inquired the name of "that officer" with such martial mien, and who so gracefully wielded his baton at the head of the band. He spoke of our celebrated drum-major, whose Herculean strength seemed sufficiently indicated by his ability to sustain the monstrous cap and plumes and other "regimentalities," as the querist called them, with which enlisted men of his grade are laden.

I am here placed in a position that makes it imperative to acknowledge that my tent-mate really was possessed of some of the weaknesses of human nature, all my previous prejudices to

the contrary notwithstanding. When therefore his cogitations were thus ingloriously interrupted, he forgot the native politeness that he usually dealt out with the same liberality to all, from the highest to the lowest.

"It is the General-in-Chief," he impatiently replied; "he is entitled by the date of his original commission and distinguished services to such preferment whenever he visits any military post."

"I do *de*-clare," said the inquirer, "is that the gallant old Gineral? I knowed it oughtu be him, or somebody else strippin' him of his laurils, or tryin' tu. What a towerin' and *mag*-nificent form! He's fit to lead on a dozen bands o' music. My father, (you know our family's allus done a gred deal of military service; — I've got a ramrod father picked up on t'other side o' the Canedy line) my father seen him at Lundy's Lane, where the old hero acted as pilot tu Mr. Miller, — I knowed all the Millers, — and won the battle. The expense o' such a gorgeous uniform as that must need a tremendous allowance from the Government, don't it, Mr. Cadet?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Tom, who had heard nothing but the question, "that fellow gets about fifteen dollars a month."

But there was a countersigned order on Tom's check-book for a pound of candles and a quire of paper. There was also a coat, with a pair of new corporal's *chevrons*, at the tailor's, which "jolly old Tim" had said was ready for issue. He had only time, before the hour for artillery drill, to procure these supplies; so with book in hand he hastened away to the commissary's store, leaving his citizen friend highly shocked and incensed at the idea of such sacrilege as calling the commander-in-chief "that fellow."

When he threw a last look at Miss R., who was to leave the Point that day, she was laughing as heartily as though she had not last night lost her presence of mind, just as though she had met a little misfortune with a smile, and had not made an unoffending admirer miserable. But Tom wasn't in love, oh no.

Her military propensities, however, had developed too fully, and she must go. So thought the watchful mother as she noticed her daughter's bracelet of old rusty cadet bell buttons, and upon her sleeve the gold lace *chevrons* that one of the sergeants had given her. Her mother began even almost to distrust the good sense of her darling, and thought that if allowed to go on thus she was in danger of being possibly drawn into the terrible snare, — sixty dollars a month

and a soldier's ration, — for you must know that the R.'s were among the princes of the great city of B——.

The young lady bade her cadet friends adieu with what seemed a heavy heart. She loved no mortal there, except her mother who went with her; she loved the immortal, the lovely West Point alone.

Twice a twelvemonth had given her beauty the riper tint of twenty summers, when she revisited us, — an orphan in her weeds.

Excuse the omission of the details that a proper relation of this whole story would involve, and accept a laconic statement of the result. A little less than three months after the date of our graduation and commissions, that lady, who at the moment of their introduction had made some remark that leavened her whole nature in his memory, was Tom's devoted wife, and henceforth his congenial and constant companion in camp or garrison, at the seat of government or on the wild frontier.

During the remainder of the encampment Tom continued as dogged as ever in his determination not to participate in the dance again. He nevertheless attended many of the parties, and formed many new acquaintances, but his entertainment was always one of the eye and ear mostly; for

he enjoyed music, and where on the continent is there sweeter music than there and then. He conversed, too, always successfully and agreeably. He knew more, it is true, of books than of men — or women, and was so far deficient; but this want was almost supplied by a quick and unerring observation and sound sense, the most effective weapons of attack or defence. The question was often asked him why he never danced, but he always replied that it was impossible for him to learn; and then changing the subject left the inquirers to their own conclusions.

He seemed, when carefully watched at these dancing-parties, to be a self-constituted master of ceremonies in an obscure way; for whenever he observed a person or group, gentlemen or ladies, old or young, who were apparently without cadet acquaintances, he always contrived to find out what polite and hospitable service might be rendered.

I labored unceasingly to induce him to forget a mishap of such trivial nature as that with Miss R., and try to enjoy these festive occasions as we who danced enjoyed them. But it was love's labor lost, and he grew at last impatient of my importunity. He would not, he said, yield to my solicitations to exhibit his awkwardness in public,

or ruin any more ladies' feet; but would accept an invitation to dance a private salamander fling by torchlight in the powder magazine, or any other *reasonable* proposition: — as also do I your proposal to dismiss this subject.

CHAPTER XIV.

A LONG CHAPTER — TO BE OMITTED.

"—— some enterprise,
That hath a stomach in't."

It will be observed that whatever amount of labor the duties of camp, including recitations in tactics, required, we were not deprived of recreation unless some unfortunate report caused a confinement to camp or tent for a few days when not on duty. Guard duty only came to us who were corporals once in five days, and, moreover, it was not our duty to walk post as sentinels. The most refreshing part of this duty was the prospect of a few hours' liberty outside the encampment after we had "marched off."

On these occasions we not unfrequently strolled back for a mile into the mountains, being privileged so to do as long as we kept on public ground. Perhaps the wiser of us, when relieved from guard, spent these hours in their tents, where they could compensate by a sound sleep

for what they had lost of it during the preceding night. But the poet hath it —

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,"

and there's wisdom in fun when one's weary with toil, thought I, and found a happier relaxation than sleeping under the hot canvas of my *six by six.* Down in the little grottoes by the Lover's Leap, looking out upon the snowy sails of inland commerce that walked the silvery and noble stream that rolled beneath us; climbing from rock to rock of the Cascades, as we returned from the cool shades of Washington's Valley or wound our way thither; under the little cedars of Fort Putnam, looking from our perfect bower upon the deserted barracks and the busy camp; alone or with a cadet friend there was ever a luxury in these cool and romantic retreats.

What was it then when, as was often the case, we were accompanied by a less soldierly friend with a pair of percussion eyes and all the accompanying graces of a pretty cousin (our own or our neighbor's) from the hotel, who happened to be just passing out the gate of Rider's (why don't I say *Roe's?* — I will hereafter) forbidden enclosure, as we severally left the camp.

A clew to almost every one of such remarkable coincidences, or to those at least in which I was

interested, might be obtained from the report of a moment's conversation of the previous evening at the visitors' tent in the north-west corner of the encampment, as, for instance, the following: —

"Yes, Miss Cassette d'Or, I am just on my way to visit the sentinels to see that they know their night orders, and regret that I must thereafter remain at the guard-tents. But I shall march off guard you know at eight in the morning, and will you walk with me at half-past nine?"

"Perhaps — so, thank you, if mamma is willing and we should not leave for Philadelphia to-morrow. But what is your haste now, and why should the officer of the day care if you do spend a few moments here. He often stands here talking with visitors himself, and as much on duty as you, and if he reports you for doing so, he's real mean and I'll tell him so."

"Cadet Rankanfile — marched off guard — reports departure to walk on public lands," said I, as at the appointed hour I passed the tent of the officer of the guard and crossed sentinel's post No. 1. Our watches had been compared on the preceding evening, and not a half minute now elapsed ere I observed the light and exquisitely graceful form of Miss Cassette d'Or passing through the hotel-yard in the direction of the

flagstaff near which we met. My little *vivandière* had on her arm a small reticule filled with cake and fruit which a waiter had been bribed to procure for her.

It was contrary to the rules of the house (which were, in this respect and some others, subordinate to the regulations under which we lived) for any *employé* to furnish extra supplies to guests in cases where there was a probability of their finding their way to the mouths of cadets whose diet was prescribed. But this law was rather inoperative, and the object to be attained as impracticable as effectual suppression of the slave-trade, for it involved in a measure the right of search; and there never was but one disciplinarian on duty at the Point, so strict as to advise the application of the stomach-pump at inspections.

And who would dare to examine the work-basket of this pretty smuggler, or even to suspect that she was capable of defying discipline? What hotel menial so mean that he would not risk his situation to oblige her? Or, had diplomacy failed, what was easier than to draw secret supplies from the dessert-table, and ruin with stains that delicate handkerchief in transferring them to the camp-ground by moonlight when there was no "hop," to the cool shades

of the hill or of the valley, the shadows of the rocks down by the river, or wherever else a pair of blind lovers might grope their listless way?

But why, in this connection, do I speak of love and lovers? There was nothing, or at most, very little of the tender blindness between us who were merely enjoying the pleasant converse of an hour that to-morrow would have been forgotten forever. Nevertheless I enjoyed this stroll with a peculiar zest, though I had waked all the previous night. If she carried not her heart with her during those few hours, mine too was fortified at every point — of course it was — by the conviction that there were before me three long years of hard study. I didn't fail to reflect that there was little sympathy between love songs, love thoughts, *billets-doux*, sighs, and such disorganizers on the one hand, and the "functions" of the Calculus on the other.

We were returning from this ramble, and there remained but fifteen minutes of my freedom, when the young lady informed me of her mother's intention to leave West Point the next morning; but before returning to Philadelphia they were to spend a week or more with a lady friend who was passing the summer at Cornwall, on the other side of Cro' Nest. And she added a question, merely a question, as to the fact of

these regulations being so strict and inexorable as to preclude the possibility of a visit to her there where, with only her mother and this other elderly lady, she should be "so lonely."

The effect was a convulsion of hands, teeth, and heart: —

"—— the regulations. I'll do it as true as Joshua was the son of a Nun; I'll do it or Moses Rankanfile has no male heir."

For her look and half despairing tone had inspired me with a Quixotic desire to do something for her sake that was gallant and dangerous, though the manner in which I was to accomplish it did not then claim a thought.

All my wise and firm and good resolves, where were they now, and where my promises to the President? Echo, polite Echo, that conforms ever to circumstances of time and place, discreet Echo, that never says a word too much or too little, laconically answered, "Where?"

It so happened that on the very next day, just after bidding adieu to Miss C. d'O. I met with an accident at the drill of the mounted battery which, though not serious, confined me to the hospital for six days, except at such times as the surgeon permitted me to take a little exercise in the open air. I had not, however, neglected in the mean time to communicate by the post with Cornwall,

and had laid my plans to correspond with a particular and anticipated result of my application to leave the hospital.

It was eight o'clock one Friday morning in August. I had been marked "in hospital" on the company sick-book at surgeon's call, as usual, and the senior medical officer was now making his rounds to visit the sick in the different wards of the hospital: —

"How are *you*, this morning, Mr. Rankanfile?"

I replied that, except being a little weak, I had fully recovered, and respectfully requested that I might now be permitted to return to camp and to such duties as I was able to perform. He readily assented, and ordered me to report to the officer of the day, and to the orderly sergeant of my company, as soon as I should reach the camp.

I lost no time in taking advantage of his complaisance, — I know not why he had the reputation of always being peculiarly complaisant on Fridays; for some said that Æsculapius didn't eat meat on that day, and others that it was for the same reason that an Irishman's boots, without the slightest provocation, always squeak at daybreak on Sunday, — and immediately left the hospital.

On the previous Wednesday, I had bribed one of the hospital attendants to induce a dragoon

soldier to apply for a "pass" that would permit him to be absent from duty on Friday, for the purpose of visiting Cornwall. The latter was to have a boat in readiness in a secret place above Washington's Valley, at eleven o'clock that day, to row me around the steep front of the mountain, for our enterprising neighbor at Idlewild had not yet new-ribbed old Cro' Nest with a grand national highway.

Had I been an old offender, instead of making, as I was, my maiden effort to play the "reeckless," I could not have hoped to succeed better in my preparations. I walked slowly along from the hospital to the encampment with the assistance of a cane, as I had been lately accustomed to do, and received the congratulations of Tom and others upon my convalescence. The officer in charge saw me, and so did the officer of the day and the first sergeant of my company. They all knew as well as I what report the sick-return gave of me, and did not interfere, for I was, of course, walking out, as usual, with the permission of the surgeon, whose orders to report myself to the two cadet-officers last named I took very good care to disobey.

I left camp again in a few minutes, walked leisurely along toward the Canterbury road not in the least quickening my pace till I had

passed the gate, when suddenly possessed of new life a few minutes sufficed to take me around the crest of the hill, over through the cemetery, and down across the valley to the appointed rendezvous where I found my naval-military guide. My cadet uniform was soon concealed in the bushes, and I had donned a respectable suit of "cits" and false mustache; all of which he had provided, for we long since had been ordered to turn in every article of citizen's dress we possessed to the Moth Department where it still remains subject, no doubt, to our order.

At about one o'clock I reached the point where I was to meet Miss Cassette d'Or. There could be no mistake in the place, for this spot was so minutely described in her last note; but there were yet no signs of her presence, and for three long hours I wandered about the vicinity unwilling to believe that a project thus far such a perfect success, should now without any apparent cause so utterly fail.

And I was not mistaken, for at last a carriage appeared in which were the young lady, her mother, and, as it proved, the friend whom they were visiting.

"Why, there's Mr. Icanneverthinkofanybody's-name true as I live," said the daughter as the

carriage approached me, "what can possibly have brought him here?"

Madame expressed due surprise, and having been kindly greeted by both, I was introduced as Mr. Loffton, to their friend whom my general appearance didn't seem to impress very favorably. She however politely invited me to occupy the vacant seat in her carriage, which I as thankfully declined, begging the pleasure of following the carriage on foot toward the house, if Miss C. d'O. would accompany me. As it was not very warm and the road a delightful one, no objection was raised and the carriage leaving us drove on.

I soon learned from my fair companion that she had been overruled in every attempt, on one and another pretence, to take a stroll by herself or with her maid, or to ride alone in the carriage. Failing in these she had with the greatest difficulty prevailed upon the others to order the carriage two hours earlier than was their daily custom, and seeing the impossibility of doing otherwise she had at length told her mother, and only her, the secret of her anxiety. Mrs. C. d'O. was shocked at the idea of my running such a frightful risk and especially that her daughter should have been instrumental in planning such a wicked and dangerous scheme.

But it was too late to waste time in regrets and censure now, so she very wisely concluded to make no unnecessary ado, but charged her daughter to persuade me, if it should prove that I was indeed at the rendezvous, to return immediately, as my absence from duty could not fail to be detected. The young lady promised obedience saying that if I had arrived we would only enjoy "a pleasant little walk you know" after which Mr. Rankanfile, having left her in the vicinity of the house, should return immediately to West Point.

"What's Time?" said some ancient and idle philosopher who had his trouble for his pains in proposing a query that he never expected anybody to answer. I used to think it was two months of cadet furlough, but Tom declared it was "what the old fool lost in asking such silly questions." Suffice it to say that it wasn't *anything* to me on that evening, for it seemed we had hardly begun to enjoy our ramble through the vicinage of, at present, some of the most delightful summer retreats on the Hudson, when I noticed to my horror that the late sun of summer had already set. The thought now flashed upon my mind that the hour had passed at which the soldier had assured me he must start on his return, for his

leave of absence extended only till eight o'clock when he must be at the dragoon barracks. It seemed useless to go back now to the landing as he must have left me for his own safety, since he might have been proclaimed a deserter had he remained longer.

There was now no conveyance to the Point until the next day as not a boat could be procured for love or money, (which commodities Tom, accustomed to rough machinery, used to call the friction wheels of Life's Old Grindstone,) in neither of which, however, was I flush, as I do still protest. It was evidently just as impossible for me to find my way through the forests, over the top of Cro' Nest, in the darkness, and yet that seemed the only hope. By remaining till morning I could get on board the steamboat that would pass down the river at about half-past seven; but my absence, and therefore the positive and wilful disobedience of orders, would have been known an hour before, if they were not already detected. Dismissal was thus staring me full in the face.

My conclusion was at length formed, and having communicated it to Miss C. d'O. I accompanied her to the house. Her grief, poor thing, found vent in bitter tears when she became fully apprised of my danger, that she ac-

cused herself of having caused by her own foolish and wicked suggestion.

"Heaven forgive my grievous sin," cried she, repeatedly, till for her sake I inwardly cursed the Military Academy and all the cloud of tyranny that hung over it, and wished Execution Hollow the crater of but the first of a series of mines (I appreciate the dubious circumstances under which I here anticipate a feature of the first-class course) that should blow it all to mankind's origin and destiny. The truth unfortunately was, I had taught her to believe at the first that I should so arrange it as to incur not the slightest danger of detection; and even were it otherwise, that the worst punishment for the offence would be nothing more than the loss of my *chevrons* as I returned to the rank of cadet private.

Her mother had in the mean time explained to her friend that I was a gentleman, an American, notwithstanding my foreign appearance, whom they had met at West Point; that my respectability was vouched for and she had accordingly permitted her daughter to form my acquaintance, but that this visit was entirely unforeseen, — as indeed it was by *her*. And it was not until the next day after I had gone that our hostess, — whom I met a few years af-

terward and to whom I apologized for this deception,—was informed of everything exactly as it had occurred.

Here was where my friends, and myself as well, were making a grand mistake in reference to the hospitality of the people who, on either bank of the river, reside in the vicinity of West Point. Our care to keep my secret from the family with whom my new acquaintance was staying, and even from that lady herself, betrayed an opinion that their treachery or indiscretion might lead me into a difficulty which I now had hopes of escaping. A single unimportant instance will suffice to show how the danger of a reckless cadet who has crept beyond his prescribed and narrow limits will enlist the sympathies of those who, from their long residence in the neighborhood, are familiar with the traditional hairbreadth escapes of such adventurers.

Once upon a time, a cadet, whose residence was but a few hours distant, received intelligence of sudden domestic affliction, and, on application to the superintendent, was granted a leave of absence of about seventy hours. There was no time in which to exchange his cadet uniform for the prescribed furlough dress, or a citizen's habit, before the hour at which the next train of cars (the Hudson River Railroad was open then)

would leave the depot at Cold Spring for the South, the direction he was going. Having gained the other side of the river without loss of time, he found there were a few minutes to spare, and therefore walked very leisurely along toward the station through the principal street of the village. As he approached the intersection of this street by another at right angles, a fat Hibernian who, with his spouse, were enjoying their after-dinner pipes in the door of a little grocery on or near the corner, sprang toward him, and both with an oath conjuring him, for the love of his own "loif and the Houly Maid," not to utter a word, thrust him unceremoniously and in a twinkling through a little wicket that opened from the sidewalk.

The cadet thus assailed, disdaining, even in the height of his surprise, to strike the woman, handled his valise so dexterously that he felled her husband to the ground, while she seemed rather endeavoring to restrain him than to inflict any injury, as she poured forth a volley of expostulatory and mysterious jargon, of which, in the excitement of the moment, he comprehended not a word. This confusion brought two or three more Bridgets to the spot, who, seeing a military uniform in an apparent encounter with the woman, counted themselves in, and joined the chorus.

This, of course, immediately attracted all those who were in the street, among the rest an officer from the Point, who, it may easily be imagined, was not a little surprised to find in the enclosure a cadet, and engaged in such an inglorious contest.

The combatants were finally separated, and an investigation had on the spot. The result was that the Irishman and his wife, sitting, as they were, at the corner, had observed this officer coming up the other street, and saw that the cadet must meet him. Their native generous sympathy was excited, for they thought the unsuspecting youth off limits without authority, and walking directly into the jaws of destruction; and it was under the excitement of the unexpectedly vigorous resistance he made that they were unable to explain their purpose.

The secret laugh in which the officer could not avoid indulging at the expense of the unfortunate cadet suddenly changed direction, and, according to modern physiology, issued from the other corner of his mouth, when he learned the present state of his own domestic affairs. He had left his wife, infant, and nurse for a moment at the station, while he stepped into a neighboring shop for a cigar, and was returning when this *mélée*, and the appearance therein of a cadet uniform, so

attracted his attention, that the cars came and went unobserved.

His wife had hesitated on the platform of the passenger-house, expecting every instant his return, while the nurse, with her little charge, had entered the cars. The lady, in her suspense, looking in both directions at once, had finally been left by the train, and now, deserted by her infant on the one hand, and her husband on the other, was found running and screaming frantically about the depot. Fortunately, it all resulted more favorably than might, at this moment, have been foreseen. For the Irish nurse, comprehending the disadvantageous circumstances under which she had been packed off alone, ran immediately to the platform of the car, and soliloquized for the benefit of the unfeeling brakeman, —

"Ou Houly Mary! is it a dacint wummin that's runnin' aff wid anither man's child! Ou dayr may, wud I trow the puir babby aff hayr, to die on the stounes, or wait till I'm convanient to the wather, and divil a cint in me pockud?"

The train had by this time attained considerable speed, and having changed her mind about throwing off the child, she jumped herself, holding him in her arms, and performing the feat as gracefully as could have been expected. She

sustained no injury, and the young soldier was little less fortunate, for he received but a slight scratch as he rolled in the sand that filled his mouth, and frustrated every unsoldierlike attempt to cry. Should he live to become a cadet, as he probably will do, it will be a source of pride to point out, from the heights on the opposite side of the river, the identical spot where he performed his first important exploit.

But you will hardly expect me to stop longer here to commiserate these disappointed travellers who were left behind in a much less miserable plight than that in which you have left the writer at the outset of this one of his constitutional fits of digression.

I was invited as a friend of Mrs. and Miss Cassette d'Or, to spend the night; which invitation, to the surprise of her who gave it, and to the terror of the mother, I accepted. It will not be difficult to imagine that, between the reflections on my situation as a cadet subject to the regulations that were supposed to govern my conduct, and the constant attempts to conceal the facts of the case from those who wondered what they were, I did not spend so pleasant an evening as I might perhaps have done with but a single one of my present companions, within cadet limits, listening to a serenade of our matchless band.

Perhaps these were cool reflections, and highly unbecoming the spirit of one attempting to play the modern Leander. Be that as it may, (for the hero of the Hellespont had, after all, nothing but a life to lose,) the impartial historian cannot disguise facts for the benefit of his own reputation for gallantry; and, therefore, I am constrained to relate what I might otherwise have been tempted to conceal. As the soldier rushes on to the "hospitable grave" prepared for his reception; as the martyr statesman, laboring with wasted strength, but untiring zeal, at the wheel of government, falls beneath it and is crushed, (what melancholy illustrations in our own country!) so how often must the devoted author who

"Wakes all the night——"

(compelled perhaps to

"—— labor all the day,")

thus raze his own fair fame for the benefit of posterity and morality!

At four o'clock the next morning I was on horseback; the coachman by direction of Miss C. d'O. having called me thus early and mounted another horse to act as guide. The young lady herself also appeared, and giving me a small package of refreshment for the journey,

indulged not a moment too long my reluctance to leave her thus hastily, but with an anxious wish for my safety bade me farewell.

"It may be for years, and it may be forever,"

though an almost endless tale hangs thereby, a hundred-fold longer than the story of Tom's loves and rhymings, and I will not venture upon it here. As it relates mostly to other scenes than those of which it is the original purpose of this journal to treat, scenes beyond the limits of the Hudson Highlands, it can find no legitimate place in a pertinent work like this. Nor indeed has the reader enlisted for eyebrow ballads or the doleful and thrice-told story of the "cruel parient."

We galloped swiftly away toward the rugged mountain I had resolved to climb. I could see the white morning dress of the lady, when we were two miles distant and the day was dawning, as she stood upon the balcony and watched our progress with a glass when she could catch an occasional glimpse of us through the foliage. We had risen but a comparatively short distance above the base of the mountain when we found it necessary to leave our horses and make the rest of the ascent on foot. My guide piloted me to the summit, whence I

could see the little world I was so anxious to reach, and where I felt comparatively at home, having climbed it from the south side twice before. He started on his return, and I, after resting a few moments, began the descent. The immediate necessity for a uniform compelled me to return to the spot where I had left it on the preceding day, but what was my disappointment, on arriving weak and bruised at the place, to find that it was no longer there. The soldier had probably removed it to a place of safety, thinking it could be of no service to me there.

I will anticipate a little to say that such proved to be the case; and it was not until some weeks afterward that he found means to restore them by dropping, while *on pass* at Buttermilk Falls, an anonymous note to me which said I might find the bundle on the next Saturday afternoon at a point near a certain angle in the wall of the cemetery. It came out too at last, that the faithful fellow had awaited me nearly two hours longer than his own safety permitted, and being thus late in his return to duty had paid the penalty of his offence by confinement and the ball and chain.

There was now not a moment to be lost, nor could I appear with any degree of safety in the vicinity of the camp or at the hospital in my

present disguise. It was ten minutes past six o'clock, and the sick-call would be beaten within twenty minutes. I hastened boldly onward and passed through Camptown, an object of suspicion to the soldiers, though I met no officer. Ascending the hill I crossed the plain toward the academy, and remained near that building about five minutes, when the signal sounded and the few who were going to the hospital came toward me from the camp. My depression suddenly rose to exultation, and weak as I was, I felt as if I had now the strength of that athletic form, the sight of which now gladdened my eyes: for behind the rest who should I see but Tom himself on the way to the hospital to obtain the surgeon's permission to visit me in my ward.

I allowed the others to pass, but when Tom approached accosted him, and was instantly recognized by my voice, though his surprise was unbounded. How fortunate this meeting for more reasons than one; for had he passed and gone unobserved by me to the hospital, he would unconsciously have betrayed my absence from camp. A moment sufficed to teach him the plight I was in, and the necessity that I should be at the hospital within ten minutes in order to my safety, if my absence from the post had

not in some one of the thousand possible ways been already known. Tom lost not an instant of time, but told me whither to retire in the vicinity of the barracks while he hastened back to camp.

He found in my locker some white trousers, a pair of which he took, besides an old uniform cap and coat, which he procured from a neighboring classmate. Putting on his overcoat and concealing the bundle under his cape, he returned with it to me and then went back again to camp, while I literally jumped into the uniform and ran to the hospital. There was no necessity to feign sickness, had safety required it; for when I walked into the dispensary I was so exhausted as to be hardly able to stand, this experience emphatically giving the lie to the alleged refreshing effect of long morning walks.

"Too late, too late, Sir," said the surgeon, who had disposed of all the other cases on the several company sick-books, and had been for a minute or two awaiting my arrival. "I shall report you, Sir, for being late in obeying the sick-call; —— What duty are you disqualified for, to-day, Sir?"

"Report and be blessed! if I get out of this scrape with merely a *late*, I reckon I've nothing to blame my ill luck for," thought I, (though it didn't seem best to say it,) as with a long

face I declared my inability at present to attend drill, march in the battalion to meals, or to perform guard-duty. But he noticed the appearance of emaciation in my countenance, and on feeling my pulse repented his severity, thinking the walk from camp had caused it and concluding that I was too weak to avoid being late. The result was that I never heard of the threatened report again.

But Tom, it seemed, whenever interposing between adverse fortune and me was always sure to get a blow from both sides. For while at breakfast I learned that though he had reëntered camp safely, as far as concerned his proposed visit to the hospital (whither he had not gone) and to me at the barracks, yet as it was not raining at the time his overcoat was out of uniform. The officer of the day met him as he crossed the parade ground, and inquired whether he had "the written permission, Sir, of the surgeon to wear your overcoat, Sir?"

He was reported for this offence on the following evening, which, with the succeeding, passed, and still the name of Rankanfile had not graced the pages of the delinquency book. I breathed more freely then, for I knew at last that I had escaped: — I had walked through the waters whose bitterness I was then so sure

would never be forgotten and was thankful. Tom, who always reduced everything to a military formula, remarked (and he never *meant* to say anything improper) that as I had escaped with what was of more value than life itself, I could not have been more thankful, had I "formed a portion of the rear-guard in the famous Red Sea Retreat." The reason he spoke thus was, no doubt, that he thought (notwithstanding my slightly pug nose) the *Christian* name of my father an index of my extraction.

Though my tent-mate had known nothing, at the time, of my excursion, he had, during my visit to the outer world, met a little adventure on my account in our tent. A night inspection of the company was being made by the officer in command of it, when, not thinking of the sick-list, he noticed my absence. Tom was sound asleep, and though he usually slept with the left eye open or at least slightly ajar, as every good soldier should do, he seemed, just at this time, for some reason unknown, incapable of being waked. What that reason was may perhaps admit of discussion. A certain fatalist to whom I told the story insisted that, as it was foreordained I should write this journal, that anomaly was interwoven in the thread of my history to help me along. I dissented from this opinion on the

ground that, being a person of remarkable *free-will*, (as far as the strict requirements of a soldier's duty admit it,) I could have done exactly as I pleased in regard to my embarkation in this literary project.

The corporal next in rank to Tom declared, in his jealousy, that Sawmill was not half the soldier he had the credit of being, and that this fact was proved by his undoubted attempt on this occasion to trifle with an officer on duty.

A facetious first-class man who lived nearly opposite, and who proposed to circumnavigate the globe by an improved form of swing ferry, using for that purpose the North Pole and the resultant of the two forces, Terrestrial Magnetism and Geological Drift, also put in *his* theory on this subject, merely to show that he recollected some of the technical terms of the second-class course, on which, by the way, he had barely escaped being found deficient.

"I have," said he, "in press of contemplation a work which will prove that this apparent anomaly in the case of an insignificant third-class corporal, may be accounted for on purely scientific principles. For as the officer directed the powerful pencil of rays from his dark lantern full into the said corporal's face, at the same time that, for the purpose of rousing him, he touched

his feet with the metallic scabbard of his sabre, a simple circle was thus formed and a galvanic current established which completely paralyzed a dormant brain." The theory need not however be further discussed here.

The officer despairing of success by gentle means applied the aforesaid scabbard to the protruding foot with more and more vigor, which was not at last without marked effect. But this effect was not exactly of the nature which the inspector sought; as the application only carried Tom in his dreams back to the experience of the previous encampment, when a stealthy night attack on that same foot by some old cadet resulted in a sudden and scientific transfer of the whole body *plebic* to the middle of the company ground. The officer was therefore assailed by the sleeper with such a volley of uncomplimentary epithets as he had probably not heard since his return from active service, and which ill became a season of profound peace.

He listened to the unceremonious consignment of himself and all his military renown to boundless seas of burning turpentine, (though it was all done in Tom's honest New England style,) with the assurance that should he delay for a moment to proceed on his accredited mission, the somniloquist would assume the quartermaster's duties in

supplying him with gratuitous transportation in the shape of tent-pegs, old uniform shoes, and whatever else lay within his reach.

At last the inspector bethought him of an expedient that was due to his knowledge of Tom's strictly military character. For stooping above the body of the sleeper and summoning his sharpest tone, he gave the command "*'ten-tion* squad!" in obedience to which the corporal sprang to his feet and assumed the position of the soldier, occupying so little care and time in the execution of the command, that he knocked the one-eyed lantern into what is vulgarly termed a chapeau, which ceremony was also performed literally upon the officer's hat by one end of the clothes-pole that Tom's tall form had knocked down in this sudden *reveillé*.

"Where is Mr. Rankanfile, Sir?" said the officer, sternly.

"He's — yes, Sir, — he's sick — he's sick into the hospital, Sir," replied truant Reason as she reseated or prepared to reseat herself on her sleepy throne.

CHAPTER XV.

A VERY SHORT CHAPTER.

"While man exclaims 'see all things for my use,'
See man for mine ——"

I HAVE read somewhere — and I trust my youthful reader will give this untenable old adage a careful consideration, if only with a view to its refutation — that he who hates virtue and loves vice is a novice in both. Not the less a novice, admitting the truth of the adage, he who knows not the world by its coldest shoulder and its sweetest allurements, — he who has never met the tempter. He seats himself in his comfortable self-complacency, surrounded by what he deems an invincible guard of wise counsels and strong resolutions. He wonders in his bigotry at the depravity of mankind and at the universally short-sighted policy that the moral nature of this image of Divinity is everywhere pursuing.

The story of my Cornwall adventure is perhaps a childish illustration of so great a theme, but it shall suffice. And yet why do I say child-

ish, as though in our day it were false that men are but "children of a larger growth;" as though the bubbles blown and burst in man's estate were not

"A little louder but as empty quite."

True it hath been said that there was one of old, who, when he became a man, did put away childish things. And perhaps the time is coming when another such glorious instance may be recorded. Perhaps the day will yet dawn when each pillar of Church and State, contented to sustain that portion of the edifice of Human Progress which the great Architect hath assigned to him, shall not deny the utility of every other; nor, in the strife of who shall be greatest, fall each upon his neighbor and perish, all, in the crash of the impending pile. I speak of those *Patres* who, accounting the lead and the stiletto the only weighty and pointed arguments of politics, play foul-mouthed tag in the chamber of council. And I speak, too, of the sectarian who orders his postilions to ride down every so-called mule cart of opposition, and shutting himself in his great car of Wun-Ideah, the enlightened Juggernaut, rolls onward accepted in self-sufficient triumph.

But I forget my story in remote digression,

though I stop here but to transgress again; for this last attack upon a new subject reminds me of my model of penitence to whom I would fain introduce the reader. He was a certain leg of the Legal Milliped to whom I once listened in a county court. It was one of those celebrated cases of Quack-quack *versus* Kwock-kwock. A seditious duck belonging to the premises of the first-named litigant, had appropriated to its own use, one day, a comfortable and retired hen's nest on the estate of the latter, and the controversy was of course as to the proprietorship of the egg. (You will recollect, perhaps, though this again is foreign to the subject, how when the case was appealed and the article in dispute produced in court, the judge aped the ape in the fable and consumed it in a portion of his favorite beverage, declaring the whole matter a drawn game; and how, unable to "settle their hash," he sent to Mesdames Q. and K. each a half of the shell wherewith to settle their coffee.)

The advocate to whom I refer mounted his professional Pegasus, and after galloping all over the Twelve Tables and every other fabric of ancient or modern jurisprudence, at last soared away to that "point in space" which even our ubiquitous professor of analytical geometry would never have been able to find. The thought at

last occurred to him that it might perhaps be well to make an application of his eloquence to the case in hand; but he was doomed to fail in every effort to round his period. At length he was compelled to accept the counsel of his colleague Sterne Necessitie, (who, though a successful advocate, knew little or no common law,) and imploringly besought the presiding judge to help him down, promising in case of his Honor's compliance "never to be caught up here again."

Returning once more to duty, I resume the consideration of the reader's humble servant, who with a corporal's guard of great resolves had rested in fancied security. A stranger to Vauban, Cormontaigne, or the German, I fortified from the system of the Italian Suicido who built about him a high enclosing wall without banquette or embrasure, and resting solely in defence, unable to see aught without, his granite was undermined and he surrendered to Lilliputius.

Previous to my recent excursion beyond the mountains I had thought those of my companions mad, who forgetting the penalty, not of commission, but of detection, had engaged in projects much less than mine. I had even assumed toward some of my classmates the gravity of a sage as I expostulated with them on such temerity, and now almost in the next moment, I had

been carried at the very first assault of a pair of dark eyes.

But forgetting my inconsistency I succeeded in making out for myself a very good case, as while on the sick list I lay alone in my tent (Tom being absent on duty), engaged in deep and fruitful reflection. A venerable and eminent philosopher and divine has said that he deserves not the name of man who has never been a victim of the tender passion. Now I did not acknowledge, even to myself, that I had been more than somewhat interested; but fortified in a degree by the principle just enunciated I felt I was so far improved.

And why had not I as good a right to be made a fool of by a pretty Miss of seventeen summers, as the great and little men of this and every other age? Woman indeed rules the world, thought I; she always has, and I see yet no signs of a revolution. And I thought of one of the great military stars of Europe who, when he had opposed a deaf ear to every successive embassy of his humiliated enemies, turned his horse and precipitately fled on meeting in the street a lady commissioner, the forlorn hope of the suppliants, — a petitioner he dared not encounter. I thought too of the unfortunate Charles who could even at the very "spring" (second-class course)

of battle's "crimson *tide*," turn his thoughts from the carnage to inquire of each successive courier, after the health of his beloved queen. Of the marble Bonaparte who could engage the outposts, with the paltry loss of a few hundreds, for the morning diversion of Mrs. Bonaparte's friend who had always been so unfortunate as never to have seen a battle. Of Alexander, who for the harmless amusement of a lady admirer, set fire to his own gilded palace; and even of the hoary headed Aristotle whom Cupid literally saddled and bridled, and set one of his nymphs to ride about the royal gardens, because she, the artless creature, wanted to see how well a wise man could play the donkey.

From one such instance to another my mind wandered back to our common ancestor, who, the most absolute and previously the most successful monarch that ever swayed an earthly sceptre, violated every principle of religious duty and public policy by yielding to the importunate curiosity of a peerless beauty, who, by the way, was "the only lady in the garrison."

And then subsiding into a deep revery over the mysteries of that fall which entailed on the descendants of the guilty pair such incalculable evils, one of which perhaps was my recent dereliction of duty, I unconsciously sung myself to sleep

by an old German song, which the modern and renowned *Nova-homo*, professor of Mateotechny and advocate of Woman's Rights, has thus translated; and which, having been set to what he calls the music of the spheres, is to be sung as the *Marseillaise* of future conventions.

Last Stanza — Canto Last: —

"For ever since the world began,
It's always been the way,
For did not Adam, the very first man,
The very first woman obey?
Now ever since the world began,
It's always been the way,
And we'll manage it so that the very last man
Shall the very last woman obey."

I was awoke by the music of a cadet sword. The officer of the day had come to tell me I was reported absent from dinner roll-call. Which unfortunate and expensive interruption will account for the brevity of these reflections.

CHAPTER XVI.

GUARD-DUTY, JANUARY AND JUNE. — FURLOUGH.

"*Ber.* Have you had quiet guard?
Fran. Not a mouse stirring."

With the recovery of my physical strength returned a former resolution to conceal, thereafter, no projected enterprise from my tent-mate; which was in effect resolving to be as circumspect as he. Consequently there was little of an extraordinary or exciting nature to ruffle the smooth monotony of camp life henceforth to the time of our return to barracks.

I must not, however, forget the very next tour of guard-duty that followed the one whose release had been so nearly fatal, and which I performed immediately after coming off the sick report. It was about midnight, and not a sound rose from the body of the sleeping camp — silent as Tara's Hall. The steady tramp one, two, three, four, of all the sentinels could be distinctly heard at the guard-tent, where I stood leaning on my musket, my relief being then on post, and I alone, of the officers of the guard,

awake. Suddenly a gleam and the report of a musket (suddenly, for in the response of my nerves my cheek was wounded by the point of my bayonet) broke the darkness of the hour and its stillness.

"Corporal o' the guard — number si-i-ix," came up simultaneously from seven throats.

The other two corporals and both officers of the guard, starting from their slumbers, threw the component parts of their camp-stool beds in as many different directions as they severally took when, in their confusion, they started for the point of attack. I ran directly to the post named, passing the nightcapped head of the astonished Officer in Charge, as it protruded from a hole in his canvas panopticon, and found the sentinel — a fourth-class man, and for the second or third time only on post — half fainting at the foot of a tree. His musket had been discharged, though with probably nothing more than a blank cartridge; but where he had procured even that I could not learn. He had, however, doubtless found it in his cartridge-box, left there after some former battalion drill?

"I've killed him!" said he, wildly, as I approached.

"Killed whom?"

"The de-devil!" he replied, pointing toward the commandant's tent. "Look there."

I looked but saw nothing; and commencing to think that, as far as I was concerned, the plebe was having the best of a practical joke, I commenced to administer a reproof *as* practical.

"He fell *there*, — there at the east end of the tent," said he, recovering.

I went to the point indicated, and returned only to be laughed at by the officers of the day and guard, who had by this time reached the post of the terrified sentinel. The officer of the day granted him an opportunity for explanation before he should be relieved and placed in arrest.

"I was standing just here, — oh, Heavens! there he is again," and he dropped his musket once more in terror.

I stepped to the place where he stood and looked in the direction he pointed, and sure as there's an Evil Spirit that in this life afflicts the good and bad alike, there, on the ridge of the tent, above the head of our popular commandant, was the Dragon of old, a very demon deformed, and breathing fire and smoke. I recoiled a step to where the sentinel, by fright and the force of the discharge, had fallen, when

the monster again disappeared off the east end of the tent and was gone. — Because the line of that little shade tree, with its ugly-shaped top, the commandant's tent, the two or three bright stars in the north-east, and the cloud of river mist through which they shone, no longer coincided with my line of vision.

In powerful contrast with the dreamy terrors of this sentinel was the self-possession of the one who was at the same time walking one of the adjacent posts. The officer of the day had required me to accompany him in his rounds after the above circumstance, to see that all were conversant with their duties. One of the instructions always given was that in case any cadet crossed a post to leave the camp, and refused to obey the sentinel's order to halt, the latter should call the corporal and report the fact; that an inspection might be made and the name of the offender discovered.

We approached No. 5, who received us in a soldierly manner. He was a little, red-cheeked and stout-built cadet, with a roguish expression of countenance, and had incurred demerit so rapidly that there was no hope of his surviving the January examination, and he knew it. But he answered the thousand and two questions of

the sentinel's catechism, and still there was another.

"Suppose," said the officer, "that several cadets were to leave the encampment and cross your post; what action would you take in that case, Sir?"

"Bayonet every one of 'em, Sir."

"But suppose they were to cross suddenly and swiftly, and beyond your reach, what would be your duty, Sir?"

"After they were clean gone?" said the sentinel.

"Yes, Sir."

"I don't know what any live man could do in such a case, if he hadn't any ball in his gun and wa'n't allowed to leave his post."

"Hasn't this man received his instructions, Mr. Rankanfile?"

"Yes, Sir," said I, trembling at the prospect of a "neglect of duty" in next day's delinquencies.

"I shall report you," said he to the sentinel, "for using improper language to the officer of the day, and for ignorance of orders, if you fail to say what would be your duty in that emergency"

"Will the officer of the day please to repeat the question?"

"Suppose a number of cadets unauthorizedly

to approach your post, Sir. They are in too strong force to be resisted, Sir, and approach with the apparent intention of crossing your post, with some illegal object, Sir. They disregard your order to halt; in the darkness you are unable to recognize them, Sir; your musket is not loaded, they pass your post swiftly, and at a point beyond your reach, Sir. Your duty in such an emergency is plain, Sir, and I wish you to say what that duty is, Sir."

"Wal," said the little man, turning up his already turned up and red nose, "I think in that case I should just let — 'em — rip."

I returned to the guard-tents, resumed my post, and all was still as before. Presently I was called by No. 8, who had stopped the officer in command of my own company, the same that I have before mentioned in connection with the night inspection during my absence. He did not know the countersign, but was on his way to his tent. My duty on recognizing him was to pass him over the sentinel's post without other formality. I could bear him no grudge, it is true, but as he had failed to recognize my name on the sick report on the Cornwall day, I concluded under cover of darkness, and by the aid of the citizen's clothes in which he was dressed, not to recognize him now.

"Who are *you*, Sir," said I.

"Lieutenant R.," said he, in apparent disgust at the form of my question, and started toward his tent.

"Halt, Sir," said I; "I happen to know Lieutenant R., and you are not a sufficiently good-looking man to personate him. You will please accompany me to the guard-tent to be examined by the officer of the guard."

"You know me and recognize me distinctly, Sir," said he in a fury of rage; "I order you to instruct this sentinel to allow me to pass, and I will answer for your arrest to-morrow for this audacity, Sir;" and he shook his hat off with passion.

"You are employing, whoever you may be, my friend, a system of bravado tactics that has not heretofore been recognized here, and which I shall hardly take the responsibility to adopt in the performance of our guard-duties to-night. If you had the countersign, and, being suspected, gave also the *parole*, or did I but recognize you to be the officer you name, I should by no means detain you a moment. As it is, you will accompany me peaceably, or I shall flatter you with a larger military escort."

He knew how strict the commandant was in the observance of all the required formalities in

the night duties of the guard. He dared not, therefore, "run" a sentinel's post, and submitted with the best grace he could command in the present agitated state of his feelings.

The junior officer of the guard was standing within earshot at the guard-tent, and comprehended the true state of the case. He received us with proper dignity and formality, and demanded the cause of the disturbance and the name of my prisoner. I made my report, and the officer reiterated the order to dismiss him, with threats of the consequences of all this audacious conspiracy. The officer of the guard regretted, at least he said so, that there was a possibility of this gentleman's being Lieutenant R., and that if his duty would allow him to judge from the *voice*, he should admit the claim. As it was, however, it would be necessary to strike a light and examine him more closely. This was accordingly done, when we were duly horrified to find that we had been speaking thus to an officer of the army. We expressed our regrets that his being attired in the garb of a citizen should thus have changed his appearance beyond our ready recognition, and that a strict and conscientious discharge of our duty should have necessitated the circumspection we had used.

He could do nothing next day with the com-

mandant toward having us punished; for that officer declared he could see nothing in our conduct, as long as nothing could be proved, but a strict performance of the requirements he always enforced. Lieutenant R., seeing therefore that he had been beaten in a fair combat, magnanimously pocketed the affront, and did not even report us for having no light burning at the guard-tent, as he might have done. Nevertheless we had a way of doing our duty remarkably well thereafter, whenever we came in official contact with *him*.

The twenty-eighth of August brought with it a repetition of the scenes of the corresponding day in the previous year. The return of the furlough class led us to the reflection, now more vivid than ever before, that our turn came next, and that only nine months of faithful application stood between us and our reprieve.

The presence of the General-in-Chief and other distinguished officers in the grounds added interest to the sunset parade, and the final party of the season passed off to-night with extraordinary *éclat*. Childe Harold's "beauty and chivalry," so much abused and so often, must come to my aid again in this connection, for a very great accession of both of those indispensable adjuncts of a military ball had arrived to-day, to

lend their assistance in closing the campaign. Several ships-of-war, both American and foreign, were lying in New York harbor, each of which furnished its quota of bright uniforms.

The next day was spent in reorganizing the four companies, and in preparing for our retirement to winter-quarters on the following day, though the reason for not doing so to-day did not appear. This evening, having procured a large number of candles, (our friends at the hotel supplying what the superintendent would not allow us on our check-books,) we illuminated the camp, and joined in a grand stag-dance, which gave the encampment a strangely magnificent appearance.

The thirtieth was as laborious a day as the moving from camp to barrack or from barrack to camp always makes it. I remember that an officer, on this occasion, caught me in the act of hiring a little ragged boy to roll my effects to the barracks on his wheelbarrow, and though he did not report me for it, he failed not to remind me, in a very *winning* way, that I was supposed to be a soldier, and that I should consult my own happiness in not being again caught in any such speculation. I therefore very naturally took all my household utensils on my shoulders, and carried them, at three loads, across the plain. My pride, however, was not a little touched by the

officer's remark, inasmuch as the renewal of my appointment as corporal had been made on the evening preceding the last, and I felt that I had not a little dignity to sustain.

In spite of the greater amount of pleasure that we had enjoyed during this encampment as compared with the preceding one, I was now even more rejoiced than before at breaking up and retiring once more to my studies. The reason was, that standing where I did in my class, with the head of it for my room-mate, and a determination to be studious, I had now no fear of being *found;* while I thought how much the evidence of a good standing would enhance the pleasure of my visit at home during the next summer.

Analytical geometry, shades, shadows, and perspective, and descriptive geometry (continued), formed successively our mathematical studies previous to January; while French, drawing, and riding occupied our attention in other departments. The recitations in French occupied the hour from twelve to one, P. M., and two hours were employed in the afternoon of alternate days in the drawing academy, where topography with the pen was at present our only pursuit in this department. The cavalry exercise in the riding-hall was not the least interesting duty that we

had now to perform, especially after we had finished the tedious detail of the first few lessons. I have said that it was an *interesting* exercise, as in truth it always was, but that interest was sometimes rather a melancholy one.

Such was particularly the case with myself when I happened to be mounted on an animal of very uneven gait, — one to which, as far as my convenience extended, a *saw*-horse seemed preferable, — and I was obliged to sit in what then seemed an exceedingly constrained position. Skill in horsemanship, when it is made to include the entire school of the dragoon, like almost everything else that is taught *ab initio*, requires many a laborious hour. Several weeks elapsed ere we were allowed to wear spurs, or were permitted to make use of our stirrups, (which, when saddles were used, were crossed over the neck of the horse,) and we were not furnished with sabres until the beginning of the second-class year.

Our awkwardness in executing, or in attempting to execute, the ten thousand commands that regulate all the motions of hand or foot in the drill of "the trooper," was such as almost to overcome, at times, the stern gravity of our instructors. We ourselves, when we could steal a chance to do so, laughed at the misfortunes of each other, notwithstanding the fact that few

of us had any great advantage over the others in this important accomplishment. I recollect a classmate, B——, from Pennsylvania, (afterwards *found* in the second-class course,) who was occasionally a victim to the sarcasm of our otherwise very strict instructor, — an officer of a mounted regiment. The latter had tried almost in vain to teach this cadet a little command of his horse, to sit *close*, or to carry in the proper position the toe, heel, knee, and bridle-arm. At last he resolved to give him a private drill, and to that end formed the rest of the riding squad in the centre of the hall, and started him around the track alone at a gentle trot.

"There, gentlemen," said the officer, in a tone loud enough for B—— to hear; "there you see the most perfect illustration of every fault in horsemanship of which a dragoon is capable."

The next command given to our companion was "Trot out!" in obedience to which, rather on the part of the horse than the rider, the gait became a more rapid one, and poor B—— rose and fell, at every step, at least four inches from the saddle, and with the greatest difficulty avoided falling off.

"And there," continued the instructor, "you see what is meant by the *unity* of horse and rider!"

The command "Gallop — march!" was at length given, and then indeed B—— seemed to be trembling for his life.

"Your horse is galloping on the wrong foot; make him change the step, Sir!" and B——, in attempting to conform to previous instructions for causing the required change of step, manipulated the snaffle, and applied his spurless heel in such an uncouth manner, that the horse became furious, and dashed away at a run.

"Squad — halt!" thundered the instructor; and B—— succeeded, by a convulsive jerk on the curb, in bringing the horse upon his haunches, while he, retaining his momentum, went over the animal's head, plunged forward headlong, and rolled with characteristic grace in the soft tan-bark that covered the ground.

"Take your horse, Sir," said the instructor, coolly, when he saw that there was no damage done. B——, picking himself up, and, like a good soldier, without stopping to brush off any of the tan-bark that besmeared his face and uniform, and half filled his eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, promptly obeyed the commands to mount and rejoin the ranks.

The next command, which was "rest," put us at our ease; and we indulged the fit of laughter that we had previously been hardly able to

suppress. Our instructor, thinking a little encouragement might be of service, rode up to B——, assured him that he was gradually improving, that even this fall would prove a profitable one in teaching him never to jerk violently the bit of any horse; and that by practice and strict attention he might become an excellent horseman, as well as many such among the officers of his own regiment, who had been repeatedly thrown. And he even so far laid aside his habitual reserve, as to inform B—— that he was very fortunate in living under the strictly temperance regulations of the Military Academy; because among the officers in the service the penalty for being thrown was the payment of a basket of champagne for each offence.

It was on the following day that Tom came very near a serious accident at this exercise. The instructor was teaching the squad to *vault* into the saddle, or upon the blanket-covering of the horse. Tom had seen so much clumsiness displayed by his classmates in this new exercise, that, when his turn came, he put so much muscle in the spring he made, that he went completely over the horse, and, striking upon his head just as his heels were disappearing from the other side, narrowly escaped breaking his neck.

These four months sped rapidly away, and the same Academic Board that had examined us a year before now assembled for the purpose of sifting us again. The result was as usual, and we were compelled to part with several more of our classmates. In the subject of mathematics I had, on "demonstration," something in spherical projections, ("45° North," if I rightly recollect,) and was questioned on analytical geometry and warped surfaces. I continued to hold about the same rank as formerly in this department, as also in French, though in drawing I came out eleventh. Tom stood first in the two former and fifth in the last, — his talent for drawing not appearing to correspond fully with that which he possessed for the others.

It was the evening before the commencement of this examination, that a member of the fourth class came to our room to consult Tom on a matter of vital importance, and to ask his advice. He happened to have been appointed from the same State in which had been the former residence of one of our professors, and had made that fact the basis of a plan to relieve himself from his present embarrassments. He was little less unfortunate, it would seem, in other subjects than he had been in mathematics and English studies, (for he was in the *immortals* in both

these,) and there was not the slightest chance for him. He said he knew that "picklin'" wouldn't save him; but he thought if he were to call upon the professor immediately, he might learn what subjects he would be required to discuss at the examination; as that gentleman was no doubt anxious for his success, the speaker "bein' a statesman o' his'n." Tom (the rascal) thinking this was decidedly a specimen of "poor lumber," as he said, favored the design, and, wishing the promising young man the most perfect success, declared that it was impossible to predict how much the generous professor might be induced to do in a case where there was such a remarkable affinity of interest.

I will leave it for the imagination of the reader (particularly the military reader) to depict the scene wherein Cadet D——, of the fourth class, presents himself to the professor and, with that potent smile, makes known his errand.

We spent two or three weeks after the close of this examination in drawing the problems of shades, shadows, and perspective, before we commenced the integral and differential calculus which, followed by surveying, completed our course in mathematics. French, drawing, and riding were continued, the second-named embracing now the conventional tints of topog-

raphy, and, afterward, pen-and-ink sketches of landscape, human figure, etc.

The ceremonies of the reception of the Board of Visitors, invited only from those States that were not represented the previous year, and our second annual examination, including my discussion of the cycloid, etc., in calculus, were at length past, and the middle of June found me *en route* for home. Furlough had come at last! — furlough, the beacon-light of almost every step of the third- and fourth-class man's progress; that had brightened every page of a long two-years' study; that lent additional interest to every intricate problem which stood in the way of its attainment; that gave a new impulse to every drooping energy, and had been our day-dream and the theme of discussion in every leisure hour. The morning of the 16th, we were sailing down the river to New York, where we were to separate; and now my cup of joy was full: it would have run over, but for the pain we experienced in parting from those of our classmates who were compelled by demerit beyond the furlough limit to remain; or, with more reason, those whose career with us was closed, and whose furlough, when, in a few days, it should come, would be lifelong.

The pleasure attending this first release from

the narrow limits of West Point, though fully equalling the anticipation, may be lightly passed over as forming no legitimate portion of this edifying history. My parents left nothing undone to make these two short months a season of the most perfect recreation, while my sister, apparently so happy in the society of her "cadet brother," exhibited a pureness and intensity of affection that my most ardent devotion could but ill repay.

I enjoyed not a little the inquisitiveness of my aged grandfather, who had been among the "minute men," in one of the New England States, during the Revolution, and who thought that General Putnam ("Old Ginral Put") was, next to Washington, probably the greatest man that ever lived. Not a movement in all our military exercises at the Point did he suffer to go unexplained; and he listened with so much attention while I described all my duties in every department of the Military Academy, that within a fortnight he had repeated it almost *verbatim* to every farmer in the neighborhood. Taking down his old flint-lock, the sight of which seemed to give him new life, a new tension to the "narve and siner" of his trembling frame, he required me to go through with the *manual of arms*, while he

compared the several motions with the way "we used to du it in *my* day." In reply to the required explanation of our instruction in the cavalry exercise, he remarked that "Old Ginral Put" used to test a man's horsemanship by his ability to hold a copper cent between each knee and the horse, at whatever gait.

"S'pose you've got ary Wes' P'inter there that dare gallop down Hos'neck steps, as he did?"

And then followed a long and minute account of innumerable "skummishes" with the "redcuts," the more interesting to me on account of the delight which the venerable old man experienced in relating them to a "military man." But the old gentleman's pretensions extended beyond the exploits of the field. I was sitting with him one day, when a little cousin who had been reading, and had met the word "metaphor," inquired what it meant. In reply, I used the dictionary illustration of the man and the fox, and, with a great pedantic display, explained that the word was applied to this *form of expression.*

"No," said my grandfather, "the *fox* is the mettyfur;" and then, with a good-natured smile of triumph, he added, "I guess the old man has ketched ye *this* time."

But lest his grandson might take this humil-

iation too much to heart, he tried to console me by saying that "nubbudy can help making mistakes once in a while, 'twouldn't be human natur, ef they didn't."

On the evening of the 26th of August, I passed West Point on the way from Albany to the rendezvous in New York. I had called, by previous arrangement, at the residences of two of my classmates that were on or near my route, and they were now with me. There were reasons enough why we should have taken great delight in this sail down the river; but we were all three too much like the unfortunate individual I once met, who couldn't enjoy a good dinner, because he might yet, for aught anybody knew, die from starvation. Our furlough was nearly ended, and the second-class course, the bugbear of cadet life, was staring us in the face. But away with melancholy was the word, and we passed

"From grave to gay —"

none of us from

"—— lively to severe,"

when on the 27th we embraced our comrades at the "Reunion Hotel." Ours was a remarkably temperate class, and though none of us

seemed hypochondriacs, there were very few who were at all boisterous.

It was the one such chance of a lifetime, and we made the most of it; for with a discretion and foresight that would have done credit to any quartermaster or commissary department in the world, we failed not to procure supplies for a long campaign. Every available inch of space in trunk or portmanteau was filled with tobacco and cigars, and I recollect one jolly fellow of our number who, to make more room, took from his trunk a large roll of new underclothes and threw them out of the window to a beggar. We purchased, too, many a valuable meerschaum for our own use, (for the use of the officers and for our own discomfiture, if the end of an unlucky stem happened to peep from its hiding-place at inspection of quarters,) or as a present to those we had left behind. All these things, the essentials of many a half hour's postprandial and social smoke, were at that time, as before stated, contraband of war and had to be smuggled.

There were some among us who, on account of a long journey and various misfortunes, had reduced their exchequer to the zero point, and with a few it was already and absolutely a *minus* quantity. Such were supplied from the common fund which, a "sinking" one, was the cash of

those who were so fortunate as to find themselves flush. It was tacitly made a point of honor for each to retain no more than about a dollar and a quarter, which would suffice to pay the passage to West Point, all surplus going *pro bono publico.*

The next morning found us on board the boat and steaming gayly up the river; leaving the world, — for the coming two years, — behind us. We had one or two cadet songs in which we indulged to such an extent as to preclude the possibility of loneliness on the part of the other passengers. Some recent graduate, when he was a returning furlough-man, has composed a few impromptu and very appropriate verses for an occasion like this, with which he taught his classmates to greet the first view of the flag as they approached their journey's end. Having no such *improvvisatore* among us, we saluted the first glimpse of our cadet home with cheers, though it must be confessed this enthusiasm at realizing the return of our subjection to discipline, was rather external than otherwise.

The excitement of the first greeting, as we met the rest of the corps, being over, the next thing to be considered was a speedy transformation from the civil to the military toilet. In half an hour or less the razor and the shears had done

their direful work in removing every trace of beard and cropping the hair; and borrowing, perhaps, a clean cadet-collar from those who had not, like ourselves, experienced the dust of travel, we donned our uniform, and "Richard was himself again." At two o'clock P. M., the Commandant of Cadets sat in his tent to receive the report in person of us all, and when the drum beat half an hour afterwards, he had checked every name on the list. All were once more in harness.

Those of us whose energies had not been entirely wasted by the travel and excitement of the last few days, joined in the festivities of this last evening of the encampment; after which we retired to a soldier's bed to wake at a soldier's *reveillé*. And had those drum-sticks played the next morning at five o'clock upon my own cranium, rather than upon the drums that woke me, the physical inconvenience would have been but little greater than the mental misery I felt when roused thus early from my hard bed, while the thought of the past and of the future rushed through my mind,—

"Then he thought of that horrible *reveillé*,
And of going to bed at half-past nine,
And he thought how different it used to be,
When erst he had supper about that time.

Chorus — Are we almost there, are we almost there,
Said a furlough-man, as he came back from home;
Are those the tents I see up there,
And is that the old prison and library dome?"

I have hitherto failed to speak of the delight with which I met in New York my old room-mate, who was the same yesterday, to-day, and henceforth. With a good fund of humor, he was capable of the most hearty enjoyment of every good joke and every season of recreation, but never swerving in scenes of mirth from an inflexible and manly dignity. Appreciating as I did his excellence, how great was my chagrin on learning that I must live, this year, apart from him. He had been appointed an orderly sergeant, while I had been named one of the lower ones, with a rank that threw me into another company than his own. We were unable to make any arrangement whereby we might effect our object, and I was therefore compelled to yield to a necessity more disagreeable than any I had hitherto known. It was, however, more the pleasure of his society, that made me seek now to be his room-mate, than the thought of any immediate advantage; for I had made, on leaving home, new resolves to maintain at least my present position and, if possible, to rise higher in class-rank; and I thought that my perfect circum-

spection would henceforth in nowise depend upon Tom's guidance.

Submitting, then, to what I could not avoid, I sought another companion, and found him in the person of a classmate, who was possessed of not a little native talent and almost every social quality that could endear him to his fellows. But this was all; for industry and application were strangers to his nature. What a strange fascination, in the character of such a person, that can lure by its example to-day the mind that yesterday took the oath of allegiance at the shrine of Duty! I was led insensibly to spend more and more of the hours of study in idle conversation, or in listening to the long tales of love or war with which his prodigious memory was so well stored; but several weeks elapsed before I was tempted, by a longing for excitement, to venture beyond the government limits.

Tom had not failed to notice, from the first of September, my rapid decline both in mechanics and chemistry. In reply to his frequent and anxious inquiries and suggestions, I told him, and as I thought honestly, that my misfortunes were the result of incapacity rather than of indolence; that I could neither comprehend the principles of the one, nor memorize the endless intricacies of the other. The farther we progressed the greater of

course were my difficulties, particularly in the former subject, where success at each step depended upon a knowledge of what had gone before.

Not a day passed on which this faithful friend failed to come to my room to render me any required assistance. But my instructors were not slow to perceive that I was not studious, and at the end of the fourth or fifth week I "went down" in chemistry, and soon after in philosophy also. Though this was all the natural result of my own folly, nevertheless the effect of these transfers was to discourage; and in me, with spirits thus depressed, temptation found an unresisting prey.

"Look not mournfully into the past," is the poet's wise injunction, and I will here obey it. I hate a chapter that terminates in a sigh, (mine would have all ended in a groan, had I not taken summary measures to escape the critical thraldom of the splenetic Dr. Rhacke,) and will compensate for this by a promise to strike, in my next, a merrier note and sing a little *chanson à boire.*

CHAPTER XVII.

BENNY HAVEN'S.

"The ——— doth fear each bush an officer."

Some years ago a gentleman (it would be unbecoming in me to call him anything else, for while in this country he gave every indication of being one) from H. B. Majesty's dominions, made the tour of our country and ventilated our military establishment in some "Notes on the Army of the United States of America," which he published in an English journal. Of course, the same degree of disinterested feeling was discernible in these Notes that usually characterizes such effusions of the representatives of our Anglo-Saxon Sister, (whom we once called Mother,) which remark it will be readily understood is paying them no great compliment.

There are two reasons why I reproduce here that portion of the article in question that relates to the United States Military Academy. The first is to exhibit to those familiar with the reports of our military commissions to Europe, the

spirit that has guided all their investigations abroad, in contrast with the jealous verisimilitudes emanating from the pens of those English tourists who, like the one before us, have made similar inquiries in our own country.

The second is to express, indirectly, a kindly feeling for this author who, were he to read the present chapter about the frolics of half a dozen reckless cadets, would believe of his own Notes, what he probably never believed before, — that they had a foundation in fact.

I give the extract upon this subject entire: —

"I spent two days at the Military Academy at West Point, and I beg to make a few remarks on what I saw there. The situation of the Academy is beautiful and romantic. High above the noble Hudson, on a level plateau, and surrounded with mountains of 1000 feet elevation, stand the plain buildings of West Point; three barrack-looking buildings contain the halls of study and sleeping apartments of the 250 cadets; and detached houses, with a row of poplars before them, are occupied by the superintendent, Colonel Thayer, and the professors. On the heights around, and everywhere commanding the river, are the remains of redoubts and batteries constructed during the Revolutionary War.

"Cadets remain at the Military Academy four years; when admitted at fourteen years of age, they are examined in English reading, writing, and arithmetic only; but after six months there is a severe mathematical examination, which many are unable to pass. As at the Royal Military College, there are half-yearly examinations at West Point; but these are so strict, and the course in general so severe, that half of those who enter the College are obliged to leave after the first examinations. There is a remarkable difference between the cadets of the Northern and Southern States: the former are generally studious and industrious; the latter, brought up among slaves, are idle and inattentive, so that they are almost all dismissed; consequently, the Academy is not 'in good odor' with the planters; for they imagine that favoritism prevails, and that the dismissals are not impartial.

"The cadets are divided into four classes for the four years' course. The junior class study the French language grammatically, (but pay no attention to speaking the language,) mathematics, including geometry, trigonometry, algebra, mensuration, and surveying; they are also drilled. The second year: mathematics, including descriptive and analytical geometry, conic sections, fluxions; the French language is continued, and

drawing the human figure. The third year: natural philosophy, chemistry, and drawing, or rather copying landscapes, and topography; and the fourth and last year, the studies are engineering, including the science of artillery, field and permanent fortification, tactics, civil and military architecture, besides chemistry and mineralogy, law, and ethics. The cadets intended for the artillery, after leaving West Point, attend the School of Practice at Fortress Monroe, in Virginia, where they see, for the first time, the construction of field-works. The West Point Cadets are encamped two months in autumn, but then only for the purposes of drill; at that time, about one fourth of the cadets are allowed to visit their friends, for there is no regular vacation. The uniform of the cadets is a gray coatee, with three rows of brass buttons and black braid; white trousers in summer, and gray in winter.

"The cadets are confined to their halls of study for about ten hours per day! They seemed to be very well prepared with their exercises, but had a yellow, unhealthy look, stooped, some wore spectacles, [R. R. begs an indulgence while he stops here to remove his glasses and to laugh,] and from October to March they hardly ever move out of doors, or take active exercise; it was really painful to see young men under

such a rigorous system. I need hardly have inquired after the health of the cadets; but I did so, and found that from January to March dyspepsia was very common; and though few die at the establishment, yet I am convinced the seeds of disease are sown there, and that they return to their friends with broken constitutions. As no watch is kept over the cadets at night, some leave their rooms and repair to haunts of dissipation among the hills, known only to themselves, where they meet women of loose character, eat pork and molasses, drink, and chew tobacco, — which last is still an accomplishment of the American youth of all ranks.

"It will now be naturally inquired what figure do the cadets who pass the ordeal of West Point make in after-life? — are they distinguished in the walks of science, and do they contribute to the literature of their country? The answer to this is, that they are never heard of after leaving West Point.

"A short time ago, certain young officers were sent from the Academy to assist General Bernard to draw up reports for Congress on the national defensive works; and he complained that so far from these officers being of any assistance to him, he was compelled to translate

his own French into imperfect English. No attention being paid to English composition at the Academy, the young men could not express themselves intelligibly in their own language; and I imagine from getting a surfeit of mathematics at West Point, they throw aside Legendre and Lacroix the moment they quit the academic groves."

But we will leave the Englishman, we treated so politely when here, to his beef *without* the molasses, and to his nightmare of French dominion, and steal away under cover of the darkness to one of the "haunts known only to themselves."

"Benny Haven's O" has been so long an important adjunct of the other important institutions of West Point, that the memory of any *young* man runneth not to the contrary. The proprietor of this little retreat, and after whom it was named, was once established within the government lines where for a long time he dispensed his good cheer of flip and buckwheat cakes in comparative secrecy. But a relentless Abstraction drove him at last from the public limits and from what had been, to the reckless and the daring of the earlier cadets, classic ground; and with heavy heart he left the ideal protection of the Stars and Stripes

behind him, and pitched his tent in the tame and unromantic security of a private domain.

And there even unto this day sits the old man under his humble roof down by the water's edge and beneath a rugged cliff a mile below the Point, mourning those days of chivalry when his poetic name was the soul of song, and the toast of twenty gallant knights that sat at his midnight board. But even unto this day his hermitage is not a social desert, though the barriers between it and the barrack-prison have been made too strong, by more modern discipline, to be passed by any save the most daring. For from the councils of both war and state have come, and are coming, back in frequent succession the bravest and wisest, gray-haired veterans making a last pilgrimage to Benny's sylvan shrine. He recognizes their every feature and quotes from every page of their cadet history, and decks the entertainment with the vintage of a century gone.

It was a bitter cold night in the holidays that were closing the old year, and we sat around the fire that crackled its merriest Christmas carol on Benny's hearth. The hour was about three quarters past ten, and Ned (my room-mate) and I had just arrived; the other five of the party having preceded us by a few

minutes. We were confident of there being no night inspection, and had left our rooms soon after the "all in" at taps. The flow of old and holiday wine, the still more genial flow of Benny's paternal soul, and withal the audible and welcoming somersaults of the buckwheats, punctual to the hour, preparing in the next apartment bade avaunt to the hobgoblin of discipline.

"Fill up," says Ned, "fill up *and*" (the signal for every voice) —

"stand up in a row,
"For sentimental drinking we're going for to go,
In the army there's sobriety, promotion's very slow,
So we'll cheer our hearts with choruses of Benny Haven's O.
Of Benny Haven's O, of Benny Haven's O
We'll cheer our hearts with choruses of Benny Haven's O.

"When you, and I, and Benny, and General Jackson too,
Are brought before the final *Board*, our *course* of life t'*review*,
May we never *fess* on any *point* but then be told to go,
To join the *army* of the blest at Benny Haven's O.
At Benny Haven's O, at Benny Haven's O.
To join the army of the blest at Benny Haven's O.

"To the ladies of the army let all our bumpers flow,
Companions of our exile and our shield 'gainst every woe.
May they see their husbands generals with double pay to show,
And indulge our reminiscences of Benny Haven's O.

"'Tis said by commentators, in the land where we must go,
We follow the same handicraft we followed here below,
If this be true philosophy (the sexton, he says *no*),
What days of dance and song we'll have at Benny Haven's O.

"To the ladies of the Empire State, whose hearts and albums too,
Bear sad remembrance of the wrongs that stripling soldiers do,
We bid you all a kind farewell, the best recompense we know,
Our loves and rhymings had their source at Benny Haven's O.

"There comes a voice from Florida, from Tampa's lonely shore,
It is the wail of gallant men, O'Brien is no more;
In the land of sun and flowers, his head lies pillowed low,
No more to sing *petite coquille* at Benny Haven's O."

This last was sung with due solemnity and all uncovered. Our host with that same pipe whose stem was proportionally as short as himself, and one of the invariable emblems of his identity, contracted that horizontally expansive countenance, that always appeared to have just made a treaty of peace with all mankind in general, and all reckless cadets in particular, into a preponderance of vertical dimension, drawn downward by a sincerely heavy heart, as he lis-

tened to this affecting tribute to the memory of one whose virtues he knew so well. We gathered around him and listened to a new edition of the stories of other days, an ample store to which the events of each year have added a long supplement.

Before our little group had again relapsed into mirth under the influence of wine, tradition, and song, the gravity of the older offenders of the party, to our shame be it said, was not unfrequently disturbed by the nervousness of Cadet E——, a fourth-class man, who had never until to-night even crossed the prescribed limits, and much less ventured so far from duty as now. In spite of his assumed gayety, what would poor E—— not have given to have been even now studying his mathematics in his own quiet room, as he had never studied before. As he sat among us and strove manfully to appear as much at ease as the rest, we enjoyed not a little diversion in watching him as he involuntarily started at every sound from the interior department and every rustle without, imagining it the footstep of an officer.

After Benny had finished his half dozen cadet legends, we resumed our song, the threescore stanzas of which, when sung with a proper observance of the military decorum which the sen-

timent and the place demanded, always occupied an hour and a half or more.

"May the army be augmented, may promotion be less slow,
May our country in the hour of need be ready for the foe;
May we meet a soldier's resting-place beneath a soldier's blow,
And space enough beside our graves for"———

"The devil and Tom Walker!" (if the reader would know why Mr. Thomas Walker's name is so often lugged into such uncomplimentary connection, I can only sympathize in his curiosity without the ability of a satisfactory explanation,) cried a cadet of my own class who, just arriving, burst into the room and without saying another word, intimated by gestures alone that there was danger brewing in our immediate vicinity.

"We are all dead men!" cried the plebe.

Benny, like an old veteran who had seen many years of just such service as this, was as cool, lending a hand here and there to "speed the parting guest," as every old soldier should be in the moment of hot action.

My skates lay at my side and I caught them up and ran to the ice. And a truly military pair they were; for every buckle and strap, as if conscious of danger, flew to its place in a moment; and almost before the sound of the first alarm had died away I was gliding swift

as the wind up the river alone. Ned should have been with me, but, for the first time in his life, he was taken at a disadvantage; for, as I learned afterward, his skates had been mislaid and he was compelled to follow without them.

The fourth-class man had not taken off his at all, thinking he would thus be the better prepared for an emergency: but the ponderous articles struck some obstacle as he was leaving the house, throwing him to the ground; and before he could regain his feet he was recognized by the two officers who had followed my classmate down the hill from Cozzens'.

The others, except one, had come down by land and, as the snow-crust was not strong enough to sustain one's weight, they had followed the road, leaving it only at such times as it seemed absolutely necessary. These left by a secret path, and took to the woods in order to reach the road by the shortest route and lose the least possible time in reaching barracks. For the first thought now was, after eluding the vigilance of these officers, that the latter would proceed immediately to the Point and state the circumstances to those officers who were on duty at the barracks, when an inspection would reveal the absentees.

When I arrived at Gee's Point opposite the

barracks, I had occupied so little time in coming up, that should our pursuers take horses at the Falls to forestall us by an inspection, I was now in ample season to be in bed and in safety. But I felt the greatest concern on account of the others, and as it seemed to me that Ned would never be caught except by the inspection, I tried as I ascended the hill to invent some expedient whereby it might be delayed until he and the others had arrived.

There was a secret grotto, partly natural, partly artificial, near my path, known only to a few even of the cadets, where contraband articles were sometimes deposited until a convenient opportunity was found of transferring them to barracks. I lost now no time in visiting it, and found a box which it proved had been placed there by the "old pirate" for some cadet, but which one I knew not. But I very readily concluded that this was not the time to be over punctilious in matters of etiquette, since whoever the owner might be our interests were his own; so I knocked open the box and removing all its contents, laid them in a corner, with the exception of a bottle which I thought it necessary to sacrifice to the public weal. After filling the box with rubbish I nailed it up again and taking it, the bottle, and a piece of candle from the cave, I

started with all speed for the road that skirted the crest of the hill and led to "the Falls below."

Selecting an eligible spot, I dropped my cap (after tearing out my name from the lining) about two yards from the road and made tracks, as of one in haste, to the shelter of a thicket and ledge of rocks near by. Having lighted the candle and fixed it beyond the reach of the wind, and so that its light should be faintly but surely discernible to any one that might pass, and leaving near it the box marked in pencil "Cadet, X Y Z," I went a little farther and left the bottle of champagne on the snow. Then, being unincumbered, by means of trees and bare rocks I succeeded in getting back to the road without making any return tracks in the snow.

How long this little *ruse* may have succeeded in delaying the officers, I know not; but every moment was precious, and I had the consolation of finding out afterward that they passed the guard about half an hour after I had stolen by, bringing with them the cap and the bottle, and that a servant was sent soon afterward for the box. I had hardly reached my room when Ned arrived, covered with perspiration in spite of the frost, and so breathless as for some time to be unable to speak. We immediately detected something wrong about the appearance of our

room, for my bed, as well as the floor, was covered with black spots, apparently of ink. But we immediately retired, and lay awake at least an hour awaiting the inspection.

Nothing was heard, however; but at *reveillé*, all our companions of the previous night were placed in arrest, and we expected that each succeeding moment would bring with it an order to the same effect for us. The day wore off, the evening publication of delinquencies took place, and still our names did not appear, though the others were reported; one, Cadet E——, for being off limits, and all for being absent from their quarters in the night.

We had been told in the morning that inspections had been made in all the companies during the time we were gone, and that the absence of all our companions had been detected. Why not ours? All were as much surprised as ourselves at this miraculous escape. Our safety, however, was become a well-authenticated fact; and the next day but one, Ned, who was orderly of the room, having been reported for having floor stained with ink, even wrote an excuse, and successfully, stating that some time or other, during the absence of us both, the ink had been upset by an unknown person, and neither of us knew or could know anything about it.

The events of this night, which involved my second hair's-breadth escape from dismissal, remained a mystery throughout my cadet course; and it was not until about a year after graduation that it was fully cleared up. I was then sitting at the fireside of Tom and his wife, at one of the principal fortifications in the Department of the East, when the lieutenant was relating to the lady some of the events of our cadet course. Among other things, he referred to the circumstances of that memorable night, and told her the whole story, just as if he didn't know that he was telling me as much news as he told her, and just as if there was no self-flattery in it too; for like all other good husbands, Tom had evidently an ambition to appear to the best possible advantage in the eyes of his wife.

So it came out, at this late day, that, on the evening in question, Tom was suffering with a violent toothache, so violent that, as there was no dentist at the Point, he went to the quarters of the superintendent, about nine, P. M., to obtain a permit to go immediately across to Cold Spring, and have the rebel molar extracted. His moral and military character being well understood, he found no difficulty in procuring the necessary authority for his absence; and having reported the circumstances to the commandant of his

company, and stated that he should probably be absent until about midnight, he set out.

Goaded by the pain, he took what is now known as the "Shanghai step," and in a few minutes was beyond the river. He found the dentist with little difficulty, and, the operation being soon performed, at a little after ten o'clock he started on his return. As he ascended the hill, and was just coming upon the plain at its north-west extremity, two officers walking toward the barracks crossed his path obliquely, and about ten paces in front of him. They fortunately did not observe him, and, as he gained upon them, he overheard a remark, to the effect that this being Saturday night, dark, and skating excellent, there might be an opportunity of "hiving" some unlucky cadet absent from his quarters; as there having been an inspection on the previous night, some of the young gentlemen might risk it on the strength of that fact. Tom had heard enough to require on his part prompt action; for his first thought was, that if any cadets had "run it," Ned would probably be one of the number, and that if he had gone, it was not improbable that I had accompanied him.

He immediately changed his course, took a circuitous route, crossing the sentinel's post near the flagstaff, so that the challenge should not be heard

by the officers he had just seen, and hastened to my room, where his worst fears were realized.

After a moment's reflection, he thought to run to one of the apartments in the basement occupied by the servants of the officers, and bribe one of them to personate Ned, while himself should occupy my bed. But he relinquished this idea, and set about making a *dummy*, which he placed in Ned's bed, and, attaching to the head and one arm of it the end of a black thread, carried the other end over the alcove partition to where he was to lie. But his hair was light, and mine very dark; so, as quick as thought, he seized the inkstand, and began to dye it, before he reflected that a nightcap, made of a pocket-handkerchief, would serve equally well.

He had hardly finished his preparations when he heard the footsteps of the inspecting officer, and soon after the door opened softly and the dark lantern showed that my bed was occupied. Tom rolled over at that instant as if disturbed in his slumbers, and when the light fell on the other bed pulled the thread very gently. Dummy's head and arm lazily responded, and the officer was satisfied, and proceeded to other rooms. He had, as commandant of the company, two halls of the barrack under his supervision, and ours was, on this occasion, inspected first.

In the other hall lived two first-class men who had been always very kind to Tom and myself, and of one of whom he now, when our danger was past, bethought himself, fearing he might be absent from his quarters. Our room being on the second floor, after inspecting it, the officer went higher up, and Tom, as soon as he could dress, glided down the stairs and proceeded to the next hall and to the room in question. But, to his own utter confusion, he found them both in bed; for where could he hide that the officer who was now approaching that hall should not detect him. His own magnanimity had entrapped him, and he had wellnigh given up the case as hopeless.

"Stand here, and make a right angle, — quick," said Cadet K., jumping up.

Tom obeyed, and stooping in the corner, his hands upon his knees, as though for a game of leap-frog, K. laid his large engineering-drawing-board horizontally upon his back, and covering this new table (we were sometimes permitted to have two) with the large spread that he snatched from the iron one, throwing a few books upon it and drawing a chair carelessly against it, retired again to his bed. It was the work of a moment, and the inspector, directly after, found them, of course, asleep and passed on. Tom afterward

retired in safety (stopping at the guard-house to report his return from Cold Spring) to his own room, in a distant portion of barracks where his absence had been already detected, but, being accounted for, was not reported. Of course he felt that he had really been unauthorizedly absent when the inspection occurred, and had some stings of conscience (he was always such a silly fellow) about the unbecoming deception involved in his conduct, but he had never divulged the secret of his atrocious guilt until this remote day.

It was only two days after this affair that I went, in office-hours, to see the commandant on some unimportant matter connected with my duties as sergeant of the guard. As I ascended the steps leading to his office, I heard his little bell ring, which I knew was a summons to his orderly who, a private soldier, usually remained in a little apartment adjoining. The latter happened to be already absent on some errand, and there was no response except my knock, which was answered, "Come in," and I entered. The commandant sat at his desk intent upon some communication he was writing, and without looking up, said, —

"Give my compliments to Mr. S., and say that I wish to see him in my office."

"Yes, Sir," (dissembling) and I withdrew.

As I went down the stairs, he added, —

"If he's not in his quarters, go till you have found him."

"Yes, Sir," and I thought the commandant exceedingly anxious to see Lieutenant S. I had not thought it incumbent on me to tell the commandant when he was in error, any more than to applaud him openly when he was right; and the discipline I had been subjected to in Ned's companionship was all that had given me presence of mind sufficient to get quietly out of the office. And now I sighed for some propitious fate to have suddenly called Lieutenant S. away to New York, by the authority of the superintendent, that I might seek him there; for being "sure I was right," *i. e.* of having the *law* on my side, I was determined to "go ahead." Though unobserved by me, the officer sought entered the commandant's office soon after I left it, and even before the return of the orderly; so everything was as it should be behind me.

I proceeded to his room with just the success I desired. Then I called at the rooms of several other officers, but he was not to be found, though he had been seen a few minutes before and had most likely gone to the hotel. To the hotel I went therefore, but "the Captain" hadn't seen him, and if he was not about the barracks, he

must be at some private house on the Point; and if not there, he must have gone towards Cozzens'.

The seeker and the sought had friends in a particular family near by, and I spent a few pleasant moments there in wondering where he could be. But the sleighing was excellent and he must have gone down to the Falls. I found a good opportunity to ride, and therefore did not hesitate to extend my researches. Besides, the haste we had been in to get home on the occasion of our recent visit to that vicinity had made it inconvenient to lay in a supply of tobacco, of which we were now much in want. This present occasion, then, was not the less important and happy on that account.

I still was unsuccessful in my search, and, having secured what supplies I could conceal under my overcoat, concluded to return and report progress. After returning to my room to unload, I went to the commandant's office and he was out. He had been seen, so I was told, with Lieutenant S. since my departure, so that a strict obedience of orders seemed hardly to require that I should go farther.

But, in the mean time, I had been detected in my absence from every kind of duty on that morning, and had been seen at the hotel and

elsewhere by officers who, upon inquiry, had learned that I had no written permit for that day. Accordingly, on the next morning, the name of Rankanfile was the most conspicuous of all upon each of the daily Reports of the different companies and of the officer of the day, and I was summoned in post haste to the commandant's office. The enormity of my offences had so much more than paralyzed his horrors that it left him more cool than ever. Three other officers were sitting with him when I entered, and looked at me as though they would much rather be in their own places than mine.

"Mr. Renkenfeil, wair yoo ebsent fram all your duties, and fram your quatters as well, on yesterday morning?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Had yoo the permission, to be sow ebsent, of the superintendent?"

"No, Sir."

"Wair yoo" (looking at the reports) "aff cadet limits near the howtel and did yoo enter thet edifice, nine A. M.?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Wair yoo" (looking again upon the books, and he was growing *awfully* cool now) "aff cadet limits at or near Buttermilk Fahls, about eleven A. M.?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Go to yoor quatters" (as mild as a summer's morning) "in arrest, Mr. Renkenfeil" —— "Stap, — one momint, Sir. Have you at present anything to say on the subject of these charges, Sir?"

"No, Sir; unless it be that I came in here yesterday morning when you told me, Sir, to go and find Lieutenant S. and not to return till I had done so. I searched unsuccessfully, Sir, for several successive hours, and" —

The truth had already dawned upon his mind; as, indeed, it ought, for while I was speaking his eyes dilated sufficiently to illuminate the whole inner man. Had he been as quick as ordinarily he would have got rid of me with a reprimand for not having obeyed my instructions to the letter. As it was, he interrupted me with —

"Leave my affice, Sir, I release you from arrest; leave my affice immediately, Sir," and I have never been on another errand for that gallant officer even unto this day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VALEDICTORY.

I REALIZE, Dear Reader, an unforeseen and much regretted necessity of leaving you thus abruptly, amid the intricacies of the second-class course. It has become too apparent, that were I to continue thus the little incidents of our second- and first-class history as they appear in my cadet diary, I could foresee no termination to our present agreeable interview, even this side of promotion; — which I consider is placing this part of the subject in its strongest light. My prescribed limits are indeed already exceeded, and yet perhaps the most interesting portion of the entertainment I had promised myself and you remains almost untouched.

My original intention, though including the object mentioned at the close of the preface, was to form a little cabinet of Military Academy fossils, for the benefit and diversion of the curious and the interested, (and what American is not comprehended here?) and to give a documen-

tary history of the institution from its foundation down to the present time, more comprehensive, dignified, and entertaining, perhaps, than all these school-boy details and camp stories can afford.

To that end I had threaded the mazes of its local history in tradition and authentic record, and a more general one in Congressional debates and the discussions of the public journals; and by extracts and references had collected some of the curiosities for my little museum, all the departments of which, unfortunately, are not yet open for inspection. All I have done, however, to give such a ballast to the frail bark that has here been launched, will follow in the form of an Appendix, to consist only of a Report made by a Congressional committee on military affairs in 1834. It will paraphrase itself, and is a voucher of its own ability and historic value.

Ten years later (1844) a still more elaborate Report, but to the same end, was made under similar circumstances in Congress. I have reproduced (and entire) the former, because of its earlier date and its character, which is a little more appropriate to the present occasion and the present limits. The latter, being of more recent production, must have been more accessible to the majority of my readers.

But though so many of these golden buds of

promise may have thus aborted, I would, even in pursuance of the present policy, that the reader might have followed us to the end, — that you had gone with me again to the hall of examination of the approaching January, to see the disastrous effects of evil communications, that destroyed honest ambition in the unfortunate writer, and left, in the brief space of half a year, his fate to depend upon a chance. And again in the coming June I would have your sympathy, were it not already lost, as I turned, with a "clean board," and even in the very presence of my parents and friends, to say in effect that deficiency had sealed my doom; and then, before my neighbor had finished his faultless demonstration, turned again, for I had seen, in my mother's ill-suppressed emotion, something that pointed my faculties, and empowered me to make an application of a general principle to a particular case, which resulted in a complete success. And once more, in my first-class year, you might welcome me back to my old companionship and to duty; for Tom and I lived together again. And in *his* final and foremost success you might still see the triumph of industry and virtue.

Yet I cannot refrain from wishing your company as well, during the lapse of this third year, in the little *by-ways* of the general course. At

the midnight and secret supper, in my own room, with its unique bill of fare compiled from all the sources and through all the channels of the contraband of war; where with eager intent we began the repast only perhaps to witness the entrance, unannounced and uninvited, of "Old Robespierre," the terror of our quaking guests; and where we mingled our curses on the bitter Apple of Gravity, that falling failed to break the pate of Newton, the plague of our academic progress. In the vicissitudes of the battle-ground in Kosciuszko's shaded "garden," where the sinews of Nature's weapons were arbiters of discordant opinions; and in the supplemental surgical prescriptions at the hospital for "contusions" whereof the medical and military authorities could but ignore the cause. And then at the end of the final year, in the sweet melancholy of "the last parade," when martial music, forgetting Mars, transports us with its "Home, sweet Home," and "sees us on our winding way" lastly and forever.

I would give you the painful details of that formidable tribunal, the general court-martial, convened by order of the Secretary of War for the trial of my companions of that eventful night at Benny Haven's; and have even ignored the present ephemera of the *five years course*, with

its increment of the Spanish language and other new pursuits.

All these and more are they not, or shall they not be, written in the second book of these Rank-anfile Chronicles, when my readers shall go with me from the Military Academy to my army home (I've seen officers with still larger families cross the frontier) to see the grand sequel of these West Point tales.

* * * * * * * *

My servant woke me this morning at five. I had ordered, last night, that he should do so at that hour, and charged him to leave nothing undone to rouse me beyond the possibility of relapsing into slumber. He had tried, to this end, every expedient that Hibernian ingenuity could invent, when at last I opened my eyes, and met his despairing and anxious look:

"Liftinnint, plaze yer honor, is there onnything else in the wide wurrrld I can do to wake yez?"

Pardon this levity, reader, for there is one word more, the bitterest of all that must *wake* your attention.

Summoned from a military post a day's journey distant, I arrived at a hotel in one of our principal Southern cities, but one treacherous and bitter hour too late to pillow the dying head, and receive the last blessing of that comrade whom

of all on earth I loved the best. The scourge of the savannas, the yellow fever, had stricken him in all the vigor of youth, and poor Tom was sleeping his last and peaceful sleep.

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mither may forget the child
That smiled sae sweetly on her knee,
But I'll remember thee" my friend,
"And all that thou hast done for me."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

MILITARY ACADEMY.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
May 17th, 1834.

MR. RICHARD M. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Military Affairs, made the following Report, which was read and laid upon the table.

The objections to the Military Academy at West Point, which have been urged in Congress, and in the public prints, have recently assumed a more imposing character. The Legislatures of two of the States of this Confederacy have embodied them in formal resolutions, and transmitted them for the consideration and action of the National Assembly. These resolutions question the expediency and the constitutionality of this institution, assert that "it has been wholly perverted from the design of its founders, and that the best interests of the nation require that it should be abolished." The occasion and the circumstances seem to demand of the committee a deliberate investigation of the origin and history of the Military Academy, of its system of instruction and discipline, and of its effects upon the character of the

army and of the nation. This investigation has been made, and the committee now present its results.

The general subject of military education appears to have engaged the thoughts of statesmen and legislators at an early day. They perceived that although the ordinary, subordinate, and mechanical duties of a soldier and officer might be performed without especial training, the higher class of duties, and the capacity for command, could be understood and exercised only by those whose intellectual faculties had been carefully cultivated. They felt that the common interpretation of the axiom that "knowledge is power," significant and important as it was, was not its noblest and worthiest interpretation. Power over matter, and over the minds of others, is not the choicest gift of knowledge, enviable and glorious though it be; it is, in truth, a dangerous gift. But power over the mind of its possessor, purifying and elevating it, subduing all that is low or selfish to the authority of duty and virtue, this is the distinguishing and kingly gift of knowledge. They felt, therefore, that the moral as well as the intellectual nature should be sedulously nurtured. They were convinced, also, that, in a free state, it was most impolitic and unsafe for the army to be separated, in habits, interests, and feelings, from the other orders of society; and they recognized in knowledge, which is, in a great measure, the result of mutual interchange of thoughts, the true principle of amalgamation. Many of them had been observers or partakers of the moral dangers of a military life; they were of the impoverished means of the members of the army, and of the

probable inability of the country, for a long period, to provide more for them than a mere support; and they were, consequently, solicitous to impart to them knowledge, "in itself an economical possession," whose pursuits are inconsistent with, and destroy the desire for indulgence in, idle or vicious amusements. To these general considerations were added others, growing out of our peculiar form of government, and the sentiments and prepossessions of the people.

As an almost necessary consequence of the national experience during the war of the Revolution, the subject of military education first presented itself, in connection with the organization and improvement of the militia. While they bore grateful testimony to the services and valor of those of their countrymen who upheld the standard of the United Colonies in the hours of darkest gloom, they could not be insensible that the struggle for independence would have been sooner triumphantly closed, if those gallant men had been disciplined, or had been led on by officers accomplished in the various branches of the art of war. They accorded a cordial tribute to the few brave spirits, who devoted all the skill and science they had acquired in the "seven years' war," which commenced in 1754, to the formation of military habits in the new levies, which were raised, in rapid succession, during the whole progress of the contest. But they had before them the admissions of these officers, and of their beloved commander, that the difficulties of their perilous undertaking would have been greatly diminished, if a knowledge of the theory and science of war had been

more generally diffused through the army. A striking illustration of the justness of these views is contained in an official report, made by General Knox, then Secretary of War, to the President, January 21, 1790. In this report the position is laid down, that "all discussions on the subject of a powerful militia will result in one or other of the following principles: —

"1. Either efficient institutions must be established for the military education of youth, and the knowledge acquired therein be diffused throughout the country by the means of rotation; or,

"2. The militia must be formed of substitutes, after the manner of the militia of Great Britain."

"If the United States possess the vigor of mind," says the Secretary, "to establish the first institution, it may reasonably be expected to produce the most unequivocal advantages; a glorious national spirit will be introduced, with its extensive train of political consequences."

It is not material to the purpose of the committee to give, in detail, the whole plan sketched in this state paper. The only provision immediately applicable to the present inquiry is, that which required the young men from the age of eighteen to twenty years to be disciplined for thirty days successively in each year in camps of instruction, where, in addition to their military tuition, they were to receive lectures from the chaplains, explanatory of the value of free governments, and of their dependence upon the knowledge and virtue of the youth of the country. A proposition similar to this, with the exception that the term of instruction was limited to six days in-

stead of thirty, was submitted to the House of Representatives in 1821, by a member from Tennessee. And it may induce those who are inclined to adopt this course now, to hesitate, to be thus reminded how soon it was abandoned by its first projectors. The obvious objections arising from the expenditure of time and money, from the loss occasioned by the periodical abstraction of labor, and from the but too probable formation of licentious or indolent habits, seem to have been justly regarded as decisive.

In 1793, the establishment of a military academy is known to have been a favorite object of the Executive. In the annual message, dated the third of December of that year, General Washington suggests the inquiry, "whether a material feature in the improvement" of the system of military defence "ought not to be, to afford an opportunity for the study of those branches of the art which can scarcely ever be attained by practice alone."

Mr. Jefferson has informed us, that when the preparation of this message was discussed in the Cabinet, the President mentioned a military academy as one of the topics which should be introduced, and that he himself raised the objection that there was no clause in the Constitution which warranted such an establishment; that the above sentence was nevertheless incorporated in the message, and was again the subject of special deliberation. The reply of Washington was, that he would not recommend anything prohibited by the Constitution; "but if it was doubtful, he was so impressed with the necessity of the measure, that he would refer it to Congress, and

let them decide for themselves whether the Constitution authorized it or not." An authentic exposition of the views of Congress is contained in the act of the seventh of May, 1794; which provided for a corps of artillerists and engineers, to consist of four battalions, to each of which eight cadets were to be attached; and made it the duty of the Secretary of War to procure, at the public expense, the necessary books, instruments, and apparatus, for the use and benefit of said corps. The result of his subsequent reflection upon the opinions of Washington himself, whose attachment to the national charter was too pure and firm to be perverted by any prepossessions for a particular object, is manifested by his declaration in December, 1796, that "the desirableness of this institution had constantly increased with every new view he had taken of the subject." "The institution of a military academy," he observes in this annual communication to Congress, "is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies. The first would impair the energy of its character, and both would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils when war could not be avoided. Besides, that war might not often depend upon its own choice. In proportion as the observance of pacific maxims might exempt a nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the military art, ought to be its care in preserving and transmitting, by proper establishments, the knowledge of that art. Whatever argument may be drawn from particular examples, superficially

viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince that the art of war is extensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the security of a nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every government; and, for this purpose, an academy, where a regular course of instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different nations have successfully employed."

In 1798, Congress authorized the raising of an additional regiment of artillerists and engineers, and increased the number of cadets to fifty-six. In July of the same year, the President was empowered, by another act, to appoint four teachers of the arts and sciences necessary for the instruction of this corps.

Thus far the legislative proceedings had been in accordance with Executive recommendation, except that they did not provide for the collection of the regiments of artillerists and engineers at one point, and the erection of buildings adapted to the purposes of education. But the principle upon which the institution, as at present organized, rests, was fully sanctioned; a new grade was created in the army, to which young men were exclusively entitled to be admitted, and means were appropriated for their education in the science of war, that they might be fitted for stations of command. It was soon apparent, however, that something more was required to afford a fair opportunity for imparting systematic instruction. The subject seems to have been carefully investigated in 1800, by Mr. McHenry, then the head of the

War Department, and his report was communicated to Congress by President Adams, on the 13th of January, with a special message, in which it was characterized as containing "matter in which the honor and safety of the country are deeply interested."

The committee invite the attention of the House to some extracts of this report, and of a supplemental one of the 31st of January, which are equally illustrative of the comprehensive and discriminating talent of their author, and of the beneficial consequences to be anticipated from the establishment of a military academy.

"No sentiment can be more just than this: that, in proportion as the circumstances and policy of a people are opposed to the maintenance of a large military force, it is important that as much perfection as possible be given to that which may at any time exist.

"It is not, however, enough that the troops it may be deemed proper to maintain be rendered as perfect as possible in form, organization, and discipline; the dignity, the character to be supported, and the safety of the country, further require that it should have military institutions capable of perpetuating the art of war, and of furnishing the means for forming a new and enlarged army, fit for service, in the shortest time possible, and at the least practicable expense to the State.

"Since, however, it seems to be agreed that we are not to keep on foot numerous forces, and it would be impossible on a sudden to extend to every essential point our fortifications, military science, in its various branches, ought to be cultivated with peculiar care, in proper nur-

series; so that a sufficient stock may always exist, ready to be imparted and diffused to any extent, and a competent number of persons be prepared and qualified to act as engineers, and others as instructors to additional troops, which events may successively require to be raised. This will be to substitute the elements of an army for the thing itself, and will greatly tend to enable the government to dispense with a large body of standing forces, from the facility which it will give of procuring officers and forming soldiers promptly in all emergencies.

"To avoid great evils, we must either have a respectable force always ready for service, or the means of preparing such a force with certainty and expedition. The latter, as most agreeable to the genius of our government and nation, is the object of the following propositions."

The laws which have been framed having proved inadequate, he adds, "to afford the requisite instruction to officers and others in the principles of war, the exercises it requires, and the sciences upon which they are founded," it is proposed "that the academy shall include four schools: one to be called the Fundamental School, another the School of Engineers and Artillerists, a third the School of Cavalry and Infantry, and a fourth the School of the Navy. The Fundamental School, it is supposed, will be the only one required for the first two years. It is designed to form in this engineers (including geographical engineers), miners, and officers for the artillery, cavalry, infantry, and navy; consequently, in this school are to be taught all the sciences necessary to a per-

fect knowledge of the different branches of the military art.

"These schools to be provided with proper apparatus and instruments for philosophical and chemical experiments, for astronomical and nautical observations, for surveying, and such other processes as are requisite to the several branches of instruction.

"Barracks and other proper buildings must be erected for the accommodation of the directors, professors, and students, and for the laboratories and other works to be carried on at the respective schools."

These selections demonstrate that the conception the Secretary of War had formed of the true character of a national institution for military education, was in very near accordance with the character of the one which has been long sustained by the beneficent and wise legislation of Congress. The whole report, he observes, "contemplates certain military schools as an essential means, in conjunction with a small military establishment, to prepare for, and perpetuate to the United States, at a very moderate expense, a body of scientific officers and engineers, adequate to any future emergency, qualified to discipline for the field, in the shortest time, the most extended armies, and to give the most decisive and useful effects to their operations."

These reports were referred to a committee of seven in the House of Representatives, who submitted a bill, creating a military academy, which, in the absence of the chairman, was postponed to a day beyond the close of the session, one member only of the committee voting

for the postponement. The subject was revived at the next meeting of Congress. The Secretary of War was called upon by a resolution, dated 22d December, 1801, to lay before the House a statement of the existing military establishment, which was furnished accordingly on the 24th. Out of these proceedings grew the act of the 16th of March, 1802, by which the military peace establishment was determined. By this act, the artillerists and engineers were made to constitute two distinct corps. To one regiment of artillery, forty cadets were attached; and to the corps of engineers, ten cadets. The twenty-seventh section provided that the said corps, when organized, shall be stationed at West Point, in the State of New York, and shall constitute a military academy. It also provided that the senior engineer officer present shall be the superintendent of the academy, and authorized the Secretary of War to procure, at the public expense, the necessary books, implements, and apparatus, for the use and benefit of the institution. In the following year, another act, dated 28th of February, 1803, empowered the President to appoint one teacher of the French language, and one teacher of drawing.

These acts afforded some of the desired facilities for developing the tendencies of the principle which had been sanctioned by the previous acts of 1794 and 1798. At the expiration of six years, however, further legislation was considered necessary. And the attention of Congress was called to the subject by Mr. Jefferson in the following message, which evinces not only his deep interest in the institution, but that he no longer enter-

tained the opinion of its unconstitutionality, which he expressed while a member of General Washington's cabinet in 1793:—

"The scale on which the Military Academy at West Point was originally established is become too limited to furnish the number of well-instructed subjects in the different branches of artillery and engineering which the public service calls for. The want of such characters is already sensibly felt, and will be increased with the enlargement of our plans of military preparation. The chief engineer, having been instructed to consider the subject, and to propose an augmentation which might render the establishment commensurate with the present circumstances of the country, has made his report, which I now transmit for the consideration of Congress. The plan suggested by him of removing the institution to this place is also worthy of attention. Besides the advantage of placing it under the immediate eye of the government, it may render its benefits common to the naval department, and will furnish opportunities of selecting, on better information, the characters most qualified to fulfil the duties which the public service may call for."

This message was referred to Messrs. Nicholas of Virginia, Troup of Georgia, Desha of Kentucky, Upham of Massachusetts, and Milner of Pennsylvania. The names of some of these gentlemen are identified with republican principles, and they will not be suspected of having lost sight of or disregarded the strict requirements of the Constitution. This committee reported a bill on the 12th

of April, which added one hundred and fifty-six members to the corps of cadets, and which passed in the House by a vote of ninety-five to sixteen. It may be useful to note the fact, in this connection, that propositions for removing the Military Academy to this city have been made at several different periods since the date of this message of Mr. Jefferson, and have been uniformly and promptly negatived.

Under the succeeding administration, the welfare and interests of the institution were repeatedly recommended to the favorable consideration of Congress by the executive. In his annual communication, dated 5th December, 1810, Mr. Madison maintains its usefulness with great earnestness and power, and combats successfully a popular impression, that such establishments were only suited to nations whose policy was, to a considerable extent, and by the necessity of their position, warlike: —

"The corps of engineers, with the Military Academy, are entitled to the early attention of Congress." "But a revision of the law is recommended, principally with a view to a more enlarged cultivation and diffusion of the advantages of such institutions, by providing professorships for all the necessary branches of military instruction, and by the establishment of an additional academy at the seat of government or elsewhere. The means by which wars, as well for defence as offence, are now carried on render these schools of the more scientific operations an indispensable part of every adequate system. Even among nations whose large standing armies and frequent wars afford every other opportunity of instruc-

tion, these establishments are found to be indispensable for the due attainment of the branches of military science which require a regular course of study and experiment. In a country, happily without the other opportunities, seminaries where the elementary principles of the art of war can be taught without actual war, and without the expense of extensive and standing armies, have the precious advantage of uniting an essential preparation against external dangers, with a scrupulous regard to internal safety. In no other way, probably, can a provision of equal efficacy for the public defence be made at so little expense, or more consistently with the public liberty." It seems almost superfluous to remark, that the recommendation for creating a new academy, as well as the whole tenor of this extract, is conclusive evidence that the constitutionality of these institutions was considered by Mr. Madison to be unquestionable. The maintenance of an unconstitutional establishment could not, with any propriety, be said to be consistent "with a scrupulous regard to internal safety," and "with public liberty." In 1811, Congress was again reminded by the President "of the importance of these military seminaries, which, in every event, will form a valuable and frugal part of our military establishment." Before the close of this session, the act of 29th of April, 1812, was passed, which declares that the Military Academy shall consist of the corps of engineers, and the following professors and assistants, in addition to the teachers of French and of drawing, already provided for, viz.: a professor of experimental and natural philosophy, a pro-

fessor of mathematics, a professor of the art of engineering, with an assistant for each. A chaplain was also to be appointed, and required to officiate as professor of geography, ethics, and history. The number of cadets was limited to two hundred and sixty. The prerequisites for admission, the term of study and service, and the rate of pay and emoluments, were prescribed.

By the act of 3d March, 1815, the army was reduced to ten thousand men, a number deemed to be sufficiently large, in view of the segregation of this country from Europe, and the diminished strength of the Indian tribes. In his last message, dated 5th of December, 1815, Mr. Madison urged an "enlargement of the Military Academy, and the establishment of others in other sections of the Union. If experience has shown, in the recent splendid achievements of the militia, the value of this resource for public defence, it has shown, also, the importance of that skill in the use of arms, and that familiarity with the essential rules of discipline, which cannot be expected from the regulations now in force."

During the sessions of Congress in 1815 and 1817, bills were introduced in the House of Representatives for creating additional military academies, which were not definitively acted upon. In 1821 the army was further reduced to six thousand men. The act of this year, and that of 1815, authorized the retaining of the corps of engineers, as then organized.

In the judgment of the committee, these legislative enactments in relation to the Academy, considered in connection with those in relation to the army, clearly indi-

cate it to have been the settled policy of that day, not to rely upon the rank and file of the army, which were enlisted for short periods, and could never, therefore, be thoroughly disciplined, but to educate officers, so that instructors would be always ready, competent to teach new levies, whenever changes in the political condition of the country might require them to be raised.

The committee will copy but one more of the complimentary notices of the Military Academy, which may be found in the annual communications to Congress of the distinguished statesmen who have since filled the executive department of the government. They will briefly advert to the proceedings of this House in 1821, as the result of them demonstrates most conclusively that the public sentiment, as expressed by the Representatives of the people, was strongly, and almost unanimously, in its favor.

Feb. 6, 1821, a resolution was introduced, proposing an inquiry into the constitutionality of the Military Academy.

Feb. 16, 1821, a motion was made to discontinue the pay and rations of the cadets, and discharge them from the Academy, and the service of the United States; a motion, the certain effect of which would have been the abolition of the institution.

The opinion of the House upon the general subject, and upon these propositions, was distinctly pronounced in the vote upon the last, which was decided in the negative by a majority of eighty-nine.

It was subsequent to these proceedings in the popular

branch of the government, that Mr. Monroe, in his annual message in 1822, pronounced this strong eulogy upon the discipline and management of the Academy: "Good order is preserved in it, and the youth are well instructed in every science connected with the great objects of the institution. They are also well trained and disciplined in the practical parts of the profession. It has always been found difficult to control the ardor inseparable from that early age, in such a manner as to give it a proper direction. The rights of manhood are too often claimed prematurely; in pressing which too far, the respect which is due to age, and the obedience necessary to a course of study and instruction, in every such institution, are lost sight of. The great object to be accomplished is, the restraint of that ardor by such wise regulation and government, as by directing all the energies of the youthful mind to the attainment of useful knowledge, will keep it within a just subordination, and, at the same time, elevate it to the highest purposes. This object seems to be essentially obtained in this institution, and with great advantage to the Union.

"The Military Academy forms the basis, in regard to science, on which the military establishment rests. It furnishes annually, after due examination, and on the report of the academic staff, many well-informed youths, to fill the vacancies which occur in the several corps of the army; while others, who retire to private life, carry with them such attainments as, under the right reserved to the several States, to appoint the officers, and to train the militia, will enable them, by affording a wider field

of selection, to promote the great object of the power vested in Congress, of providing for the organization, arming, and disciplining the militia."

The committee have now completed what may be termed the history of the opinions and action of the executive and legislative departments in relation to the Academy. They have shown the correctly balanced mind of Washington passing from doubt to assured conviction, upon the question of its constitutionality; the philosophic mind of Jefferson, whose biases were ever against free constructions, relinquishing the confident opinion he had expressed in the negative upon the same question, and proposing an enlargement of the institution; the clearly discriminating mind of Madison, exerting its great powers to perpetuate the existing, and create new establishments, unshackled by a doubt of the constitutional authority of the government, and his example imitated by his friend and successor. They have shown the recognition by Congress of the soundness of the principle upon which these institutions are based, in the acts of 1794 and 1798; the distinct and not to be mistaken expression of the conviction of the same body, of their power, and of the expediency of exercising their power, to establish a military academy, in the act of 1802; and this, too, after the project of such an institution had been fully developed, in all its extent, in the official report of 1800, and had been two years open for their consideration, and the consideration of their constituents; and, lastly, they have shown an unbroken series of legislative enactments for the support and extension of the Academy, running

through a period of nearly twenty years, and the failure of the attempts which have been made to induce an opposite course of legislation. In the apprehension of the committee, it will be difficult to find, in the recorded history of the country, a question upon which public sentiment has been more fully and fairly tested, and has been more unanimous.

They proceed to give a brief sketch of the system of instruction and discipline. Under the existing regulations, the cadets are encamped in the months of July and August, during which period the instruction is exclusively military. As the candidates annually admitted are required to join the Academy in June, they become, immediately upon their entrance, acquainted with the manual and drill of the soldier. The remaining ten months are passed at the institution, where not less than nine, nor more than ten, hours are daily devoted to study. The cadets are divided into four classes: the oldest is designated as No. 1, the youngest as No. 4. In accordance with the prescribed military course, the cadets of the 4th class are taught the school of the soldier; those of the 3d the school of the company; those of the 2d the school of the battalion; those of the 1st the evolutions of the line. In the scientific course are included French, drawing, rhetoric, moral and political science; mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, mineralogy, geology; to these are added a course of artillery, engineering, and the science of war. A few words will illustrate the advantages to be derived from acquisitions in these different branches.

The French language, and next to that the German, are the great repositories of military learning; and he who would become an accomplished officer, must be able to read intelligently, and with profit, the text-books in at least the first of these languages. Drawing has been aptly denominated the only language by which visible objects can be described. The practice of this art not only improves the faculty for observation, by rendering it more keen and exact, but is specially necessary in military surveys, to obtain correct plans of ground for the purposes of war, on which shall be correctly designated the roads, rivers, woods, and ravines, with the prominent points of defence and command. Elementary mathematics comprise algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, which are the foundation of military surveying, and, with descriptive mensuration, constitute the basis of the art of fortification, and also of engineering, in its various branches in the construction of roads, bridges, and canals, and of a knowledge of machines and machinery. The higher branches of mathematics embrace analytical geometry, its application to the investigation of the conic sections, which is indispensable to a comprehensive understanding of the course of astronomy, and the differential and integral calculus, the agents by whose aid the obscure laws in every department of natural philosophy are made manifest. Chemical philosophy, mineralogy, and geology, are means to afford a knowledge of the materials to be employed in civil or military engineering, of the places where they are to be found, and of the spots adapted for mining, sapping, or draining. The

course of artillery is designed to make the pupils acquainted with the construction, machinery, and materials of pieces of ordnance, and their use in the field. The branches of rhetoric, of moral and political science, have been superinduced, because, without some knowledge of them, the education of the cadets would be imperfect, and their association with intelligent men in society would be upon unequal terms.

In imparting this varied instruction, twenty-eight teachers are constantly and sedulously employed; and the facilities for its acquisition are a library, a philosophical and chemical apparatus, and a military laboratory, all of which, it is desirable, should be enlarged and improved.

During the first six months, the studies are confined to the French language and the mathematics. At their expiration, the members of the new class are examined. It is estimated that about one quarter fail to pass this examination. The others are arranged in classes and sections, according to merit. There is thenceforth a free competition, and each must achieve for himself the success which may claim the bestowment of reward. An annual examination takes place in June before a Board of Visitors, invited to attend by the Secretary of War. They who are found deficient, and whose deficiency is attributable to idleness or incapacity, are dismissed. Each cadet obtains rank in each branch of study, according to his proficiency in that branch, ascertained from the weekly class reports, and the results of the examinations be-

fore the Academic Board in January, and the Board of Visitors in June. A strong stimulus is thus supplied for exertion in that department of study, for which a cadet may have a peculiar aptitude; and this stimulus is not weakened by the consciousness that excellence in that department will be neutralized by imperfection in another. An additional incentive for intellectual effort is furnished in the regulation, that the relative rank in the army shall be determined by the rank acquired at the Academy.

The discipline, to which the cadets are subject, is a judicious combination of military and paternal rule. No unreasonable restraints or burdens are imposed. Weekly opportunities for explanation and defence are afforded, and two hundred marks of censure must be recorded, and remain unexplained, before a sentence of suspension can be pronounced.

The implied contract with parents, to provide moral instruction for their children, is fulfilled, and the obligation of the government is recognized, to make the cadet, when in the field, a faithful representative of his countrymen, "by making him a good citizen and an honest man."

There are two provisions in the police of the Academy which are worthy of especial notice. Their necessary tendency is to the formation of those habits of thought and of action which constitute distinctive features in a manly character. The first is that which limits the allowance of money by parents and guardians, and places the specified sum in the custody of the super-

intendent; and at the same time, leaves the amount the cadet shall receive monthly in money, dependent upon the system and economy of his expenditures. The second is that which imposes upon all the cadets, in succession, the duties of keeping their apartments in a state of perfect cleanliness and order, and of daily inspecting and reporting their condition. The wisdom of the first provision is attested by the collegiate axiom, that "the stock of knowledge acquired is in the inverse ratio with the money spent." The wisdom of the second will be apparent, upon a moment's reflection upon the value of a habit of attention to the observance of neatness and regularity to those whom the various fortune of their profession may place in circumstances in which their personal comfort and health will depend materially, if not entirely, upon themselves. The adoption of these regulations is strongly indicative of the desire of their framers to introduce an equality in dress and expenditure, and to foster a feeling of self-reliance and independence, destructive of false pride, and of all exclusive or aristocratic pretensions. This feeling of self-reliance enables the mind, free from unworthy external influences, to exert its energies and develop all its capacities, and to secure for its efforts their appropriate and legitimate reward.

After a careful and impartial consideration of the tendencies and operation of this system of instruction and discipline, the committee express their deliberate conviction, that it would be difficult to devise one bet-

ter adapted to form an able and accomplished officer, or combining more encouragement for intellectual and moral effort, in the adequate and enduring honors it promises, with stronger dissuasives from indolence and vice, in the certainty it holds out of immediate humiliation and punishment.

The committee now enter upon an examination of a part of the general subject referred to them, which has given occasion for much of the popular prejudice existing against the Military Academy — the rules by which the selection of candidates for admission is determined, connected with the prescribed qualifications. These qualifications, consisting in a knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, (the acquisitions of pupils of ordinary capacity in the schools of lowest grade in our country,) cannot, in the judgment of any, be deemed too high. On the contrary, they who have considered them, in connection with the positive advantages to be derived from the institution, have regarded them as too low. And, at various periods, propositions have been made by different Boards of Visitors, that there should be required, in addition, some acquaintance with the Latin language, and with some of the higher branches of mathematics. But these propositions have not induced a change, as both justice and policy equally demanded, that the academy should be accessible to all grades of society. A yet stronger reason againt innovation was found in the fact, familiar to those who are conversant with mental philosophy, or who have been observant of the

mental habits of youth, that the capacity for successful effort may exist in a dormant state from the absence of the incentives and the means of preparation for exertion, and be awakened to vigorous action by being brought in continued contact with these incentives and means.

Prior to 1817, various circumstances connected with the condition of the country and of the academy, contributed to render admission to it far less an object of ambition than it has since become. The openings for the aspiring, before the commencement of the second war for independence, were indicated by the pacific policy of the country. The talents of the young were exerted in achieving preëminence in the legislative or judicial halls, or in acquiring the wealth to be gained in commercial intercourse with foreign lands. Undoubtedly military science and skill assumed more important aspects in the public mind during the progress of that war. But the sure means of obtaining this science and skill were not as perceptible in the then inperfect organization and instruction of the Military Academy as they have been since the year 1817, when a gentleman and a soldier of rare endowments, and of peculiar fitness for the station, was placed at its head, and intrusted with its direction and superintendence. From that period the increasing reputation of the institution attracted towards it the public attention, and young men of ardent minds and strong powers, sought a participation in its privileges and advantages. This general emulation imposed upon the department, by which

the selection of candidates was to be made, the necessity of adopting some general rule, which should exclude the imputation of favoritism, and be equitable for all. One principle was admitted to be fundamental, — that the doors of an institution which was sustained by the munificence of the country, should be first opened to receive the sons of those who had bravely perilled, or who had nobly lost, their lives in its defence. Another principle, which naturally suggested itself to the minds of those who wished that the army should be deservedly honored, was that uncommon intellectual ability should be a guaranty of success to an applicant. In the application of these principles, however, even upon the supposition that selections were limited to these two classes, there might often occur a serious practical difficulty. The very word selection, implies a balancing of claims, and it is not to be supposed that any individual, however extensive his intercourse with society might have been, would be able, from his personal knowledge of candidates, to frame, in all cases, a just award. This difficulty increased as the number of admissions to be granted increased, and as the classes, from which a selection was to be made, were multiplied. To rely entirely upon the representations of individuals residing at a distance, and equally unknown with those whom they recommended, would be obviously most unsafe. It would be reposing confidence under circumstances, which would not justify trust in ordinary matters of pecuniary interest. The representative branch of the government, including under this denomination the Sen-

ate and the House, afforded a means of obtaining the information prerequisite to a decision, which promised an effectual security for the rights of all. No inference could be more legitimate than this, that they who were intrusted with the higher concerns of the people, and who were directly responsible to the people, would be safe counsellors in the administration of this interest. From these and similar views originated, probably, the rule of selecting one cadet from each congressional district, and of allowing great weight to the recommendations of the representatives of the respective districts. This rule, while it afforded to the appointing power the means of judging correctly, or rather of avoiding error, was acceptable to the representatives and to their constituents. To the former, as it gave them opportunities of extending their personal influence, or of gratifying their feelings of personal regard. To the latter, who could thus present their claims with more freedom and confidence through the medium which the constitution and their own choice had provided. It is true that, in some instances, a representative might feel himself bound to present the names of several candidates, and that then the final decision must be made by the head of the department. But such instances are of rare occurrence, and it is believed that the fact is susceptible of positive proof, that, in a vast majority of cases, the selections have been determined by the representative of the district, or by the joint action of all the members of a delegation from the State. The necessary operation of this rule leaves but little patronage with the

appointing power, and the danger of an abuse of the privilege allowed them by the representatives, is guarded against, not only by their responsibility to their constituents, but by the sense of honor, which will forbid them to mislead the judgment of him who relies upon them for the means of deciding rightly. It has been alleged, however, that under the influence of the motives which have been alluded to, (the extension of their personal interest and the gratification of personal regard,) the representatives have exerted themselves for the success of the wealthy or powerful. A complete vindication of a majority of those who have had an agency in the appointments which have been made for a long series of years, is furnished in the facts, that not more than one fifteenth of any one class could have received, without this aid, more than a common English school education, and that a still smaller number of the officers of the army possess any income or means of support beyond their regular pay and emoluments. It seems to the committee, that this objection underrates the intelligence and moral feeling of both representatives and people. The sentiments of gratitude and veneration for the worthies of the Revolution have not so far subsided, nor the appreciation of uncommon mental power become so rare in any community, that the overlooking, by a representative or an officer of the government, of a son of the former, or the possessor of the latter, in favor of one whose only recommendations were wealth or influence with a party, would not draw upon him their distrust and contempt. The committee have given

this answer to the imputation that undue preference has been shown for the wealthy, because the truth warranted them in so doing. But they by no means admit that where there are natural endowments and capacities of a high order, the possession of wealth would be a proper ground of exclusion from the Academy. It should be open to all.

The committee will admit, for the moment, that the objections of exclusiveness, favoritism, and aristocracy, are well founded. The question immediately occurs, will these objections be removed by abolishing the Military Academy? While the Academy exists, the rank of cadet is the lowest grade in the army; if it be discontinued, the rank of second lieutenant will be the lowest. The change is simple and apparently unimportant; the consequences are worthy of grave consideration.

The average number of vacancies in the army for the last ten years is 25; the average number of admissions to the academy for the same period is 119. The opportunities for entering the army, therefore, will be diminished in the ratio of 119 to 25. This certainly will not render it less exclusive. But it is said it will be more popular, because the vacancies will be filled by selections from the community at large. Do not the wealthy, and those possessing political influence, constitute a part of the community? and will not the appointing power have the same inducements for preferring their applications for lieutenant's commissions that he now has for preferring their applications for cadets' warrants? Will not these applications be made through the representatives, and

will there not be the same reasons for relying upon their recommendations? How then will the opportunities for favoritism be lessened? On the other hand, the vacancies which annually occur, are now supplied by those graduates of the Academy, who have acquired distinction by their conduct and attainments, and are prepared to undertake the higher duties of their profession. If these vacancies are to be filled from the mass of our citizens, there will be added to the army, each year, twenty-five lieutenants, to whom every branch of duty and service will be new, and who, after four years, instead of being familiar with the theory, science, and practice of war, will be very slightly and imperfectly acquainted with the two first, and only tolerably proficient in the last. And to accomplish this result, a considerable pecuniary expenditure must be made. The pay of the twenty-five lieutenants for the four years will be $75,800; that of twenty-five cadets for the same time, including everything for their education, will be $46,200. The difference, $29,600, is the amount the nation will be required to pay for a change in the military establishment, which will deprive it of its great ornaments of talent, learning, and skill, and effect a general deterioration in the character of the officers and the army. The military and scientific information diffused throughout the country by those who pass two or three years at the Academy, but do not complete the course, or who complete the course, but do not enter the army, is considered in this estimate, to be a fair equivalent for the expense of their education; as this information is, or may be, applied to

perfecting the discipline of the militia, and the construction of works of improvement.

The result to which the committee have arrived is, that the imputation of favoritism is one which is incident to all governmental appointments; that it will not be avoided by making the grade of second lieutenant the grade of admission in place of that of cadet; and that it is as carefully guarded against by the existing rules for selection as it can well be. That it is equally unwise and impolitic to dispense with that system of previous trial, to which candidates for the army are now subjected, by which the incompetent are excluded. If it be dispensed with, persons will be advanced to important posts, who can never be distinguished, and who will outrank others, of far more capacity to be useful and eminent. The military profession will soon cease to excite the ambition of the aspiring and gifted; the moral force of the army will be diminished, and its physical force may then prove too feeble for its defence against internal or foreign foes.

It is natural to remark, in this connection, that the same system, in its essential features, exists in the naval department with regard to the admission and education of midshipmen. The regulations of that service prescribe that these young men, who are selected by the Secretary of the Navy, shall spend five years on shipboard, during which period of probation they shall be instructed by the chaplains or school-masters; and that they shall pass an examination by a board of officers before they can be candidates for the rank of lieutenant. Here, then, is a body of young men, who are selected by

an individual, educated at the public expense, liable to be dismissed, if they fail at an examination through incapacity or idleness, and who alone can be advanced to the posts of lieutenants. Is there not, obviously, the same reason for the charges of exclusiveness and favoritism, as there is in the case of cadets? The only difference is, that a ship is the school for the one, the Academy at West Point for the other. The consequence of this difference is, that the former are less thoroughly and extensively taught than the latter. It cannot surely be that the very perfection of the military institution, and the many advantages it combines and holds out, occasion the objections to it, and the efforts that are made to render it unpopular in the country. The impulse of true patriotism would be to extend to the navy similar means of improvement with those enjoyed by the army; to substitute, for the mere theoretical teaching in navigation young midshipmen derive from their school-masters, and the practical acquaintance with nautical instruments they are obliged to seek from the lieutenants or older midshipmen, a naval school — a school in which they may acquire a "competent knowledge even of the art of shipbuilding, the higher mathematics, and astronomy; the literature, which can place our officers on a level of polished education with the officers of other maritime nations; the knowledge of the laws, municipal and national; the acquaintance with the principles of honor and justice," which constitute the distinction of "the warrior patriot."

The committee are inclined to believe, that not a small

part of the unfriendly feeling which has been manifested towards the Military Academy, is attributable to a vague impression that it is maintained at a heavy and unreasonable expenditure. In refutation of this impression, they submit a statement of the expenses of this institution for successive periods: —

From 1802 to 1821, the annual cost to the country for each cadet was	$555.50
From 1817 to 1821, it was	525.25
From 1823 to 1833, it was	421.55

These sums include all the expenditures of every kind, and the statement exhibits the singular fact that the expenditures have sensibly diminished, while the means and advantages for education have increased; a fact which demonstrates the strict observance of a system of rigid economy and supervision. The monthly pay of the cadets, which forms a part of the above amounts, is $28.20; from this deductions are made, in conformity with the regulations, for boarding, clothing, books, etc.; the balance, which the cadet may receive in cash, seldom exceeds $4.50 per month. This matter was carefully scrutinized by a sub-committee of the Board of Visitors in 1824, of which the late Mr. Johnston, of Louisiana, was chairman. And few, probably, will dissent from their conclusion, "that while care and prudence will enable a cadet, by the provision made for him, to meet his necessary expenses, nothing but great exactness will produce this result; and the pay and emoluments could not be reduced without very serious injury to the institution."

Remote as is our native land from the military governments of Europe, and distinct as has ever been its policy, it is evident, from the extract which has been copied from the annual message of Washington in 1796, that these circumstances did not, in his view, justify remissness in preparing for war. The new governments, which have sprung up in this hemisphere, since that date, render this duty of preparation far more obligatory. It is our interest, as well as our duty, to be equally ready, with any other nation, for active warfare. And we may learn wherein they are superior, and at the same time discover the fallacy of a very common impression, that the emergencies of war can be always met by brave men, although undisciplined, by a brief and rapid notice of the establishments existing in other countries for the education of soldiers and officers.

In 1812, the Duke of York issued a general order for the formation of regimental schools, to be conducted upon military principles, and designed for the instruction of non-commissioned officers. In 1801, a government was appointed for the Royal Military College, which had been then two years in existence, and which was intended for youths, upon their entrance into the service, and for officers who had attained to manhood, and desired to qualify themselves for staff appointments.

The first department was to be filled by selections from the following classes : —

1. The sons of officers of all ranks, whether of the land or sea service, who had died in the service, leaving their families in pecuniary distress.

2. Sons of all officers of the army, above the rank of subalterns, upon payment of annual stipends, varying in amount from £30 to £70.

3. Orphan sons of officers who had not left their families in pecuniary distress, upon an annual payment of £125.

The qualifications exacted of those who had been classically educated, were a knowledge of the four elementary rules of arithmetic, with a power of translating Virgil, Cæsar, etc.; and of others was required a knowledge of grammar, orthography, and arithmetic as far as vulgar and decimal fractions. The rank of the members of this department, on leaving the college, was to be regulated by the result of the examination, and the merit rolls of conduct. The course of study prescribed for them in mathematics, rose from simple arithmetic, through algebra, geometry, etc., to the conic sections; in fortification, it comprehended the three systems of Vauban, the construction of field-works, and the science of attack and defence; in military drawing, it included the art of copying plans, and of delineating the military survey of a country; and in the languages, it embraced the French, German, and Latin. To these were added a miscellaneous course of geography, ancient and modern history, of natural and experimental philosophy. A commission could be obtained, either by proficiency in the whole course of mathematics, fortification, and military drawing, with a tolerable acquaintance with the languages, or by public examination in any three of the branches of Latin, German, French, and general history, supported by certain

designated attainments in geometry, drawing, and fortification.

The members of the senior department in this college were required to be twenty-one years of age, to have served three years abroad, or four years at home, and to pay for their instruction thirty guineas per annum. Their studies were distinguished from those of the junior department only by being more extensive. The annual charge to the country for the maintenance of this college is $115,200.

Of the Practical School for engineers, at Chatham, and the Royal Academy for artillery and engineers at Woolwich, only this cursory mention can be made.

In France, the Polytechnic School, which has taken the place of the first school for engineers, established at Mezieres in 1746, is designed to communicate such theoretical knowledge as is necessary, in common, to the civil and military engineers, the officers of artillery, the constructors of ships, the engineers of mines, and the topographical engineers. All candidates are admitted who pass a public examination in arithmetic, geometry, algebra, trigonometry, and statics, who have been members of the third Latin class in one of the *Lycées*, and are able to draw, and to speak and write their native language with purity and correctness. At the expiration of two years the pupils choose the branch of the public service to which they will be attached; they then repair to the school in which the appropriate studies for that branch are pursued, called a school of application.

The schools of application for civil engineers, for the

topographical corps, and the engineers of mines, are at Paris. The students in the first witness the construction of public works during the spring and summer. In the winter they make *projets* of roads, canals, etc., estimates of their cost, and memoirs on the progress of their construction. The students in the second are provided with a large cabinet of minerals, and those in the third with a collection of maps and topographical memoirs. The schools for the military engineers and the students of artillery are at Metz, where they have constantly before them fortifications of great strength, and framed with great skill; an arsenal of construction, a foundry, manufactory of powder, and parks of artillery. The term of instruction, in each of these schools, is two years; at the close of which the pupils are detailed to fill vacancies in the corps for which they have been educated. The number of dismissals within the four years is in the proportion of 37 to 100.

In Hanover, Sweden, Russia, and Prussia, similar establishments for military education exist and are conducted upon a larger or less extended scale.

If nations, warlike in their temperament and habits, surrounded with fortifications and well-furnished repositories of all the implements of war, incur the expense of these primary schools for their soldiers and officers, does not the conviction strike every mind irresistibly that they must be much more essential in a republic like this, whose policy and the pursuits of whose people are pacific, where there are but few fortifications, and where the armories and arsenals contain only the most common

instruments of warfare, and where the expense of maintaining these institutions is comparatively unimportant? Who does not perceive, who has not learnt from the history of his country, how unequal must be the contest with an enemy, led on by officers who have been thus carefully formed for command, if the nation have no other defenders than its undisciplined militia? Who would not prefer to sustain a military academy in each State of the Union, rather than witness the blood of his brave countrymen fruitlessly shed? The praise of heroic valor will not compensate for the loss of the dead, or the sorrows of their friends who survive, or the humiliation of defeat. It would be legislative cruelty to break up an institution in which officers can be formed, who will guide triumphantly our brave citizens to combat upon equal terms with the well-trained troops of a foreign power. And if we would be secure from insult and invasion, we shall cherish this institution as the surest means of being always in such a state of preparation as will deter an enemy from both, by requiring him to maintain an army and apparatus too vast and expensive to be long supported.

Our whole army possesses now far more of the public respect and confidence than it did not many years since. It is the great distinction of the Academy at West Point, that it has contributed largely and effectually to this elevation of the character of the military establishment. And it has accomplished a nobler service, by sending forth numbers annually, competent to superintend the construction of those chains of internal improvement

which are to be the eternal bonds of our national Union. The railroads which connect the capital of Massachusetts with the "heart" of the State, and with important harbors in Rhode Island and Connecticut; the improved facilities of communication afforded to the whole country by the Susquehanna and Baltimore, Baltimore and Ohio railroads, and the similar construction between Charleston and Hamburg; the new roads which have augmented the wealth of the Territories of Michigan and Arkansas, by opening new channels of transportation; and the securities extended to the internal and foreign commerce of the nation by important harbor improvements upon the shores of the lakes, and upon the sea-coast, — these are some of the enduring memorials of the usefulness of the Military Academy, and of the returns it has made for the care and time and money which have been bestowed upon it. Other testimonials and other rewards have been accorded it by the literary institutions of our land, which have invited its graduates to fill important professorships. The president and one of the professors in the college of Louisiana, the president of Hamilton College, and the vice-president and the professor of mathematics in Kenyon College in Ohio; the professors of mathematics in the College of Geneva, and in the University of Nashville, the professors of chemistry in the universities of Pennsylvania and Virginia, have all been members of the Academy, and have resigned their commissions in the army upon receiving these honorable appointments; and very recently, two second-lieutenants have accepted vacant chairs in the University of New York. No words

can demonstrate, with one half the force and impressiveness, the beneficial influences of the Military Academy upon the characters of its members, and upon the national reputation. Within the short period of thirty years, this institution, whose own high reputation is now sustained by professors, all of whom, with but one exception, have been educated within its walls, has not only furnished to the army gallant and accomplished officers, and to the country skilful engineers, but has sent forth principals and professors to ornament and sustain colleges and literary seminaries. To this list of those who have been thus distinguished might be added the name of Ritner, who graduated with a highly respectable rank, in possession of his comrades' affection and confidence, and became the professor of civil and topographical engineering in Washington College in Pennsylvania, and died at the moment when the prospect of serving his native State dawned upon him, and when his native State began to rejoice in the anticipation of his usefulness and success.

The committee beg leave to remark, in concluding their report, that, if to owe its origin to Washington, the father of his country; to have been sustained and fostered by the countenance and support of other framers of our Constitution, and their associates in the public service; if to have redeemed and elevated the character of the army, and increased the national renown; if to have multiplied and cemented the bonds of union; if to have proved itself clear of having afforded just cause for the imputations of exclusiveness and favoritism, — if these

circumstances can entitle any institution to the continued liberal aid of the national Legislature, the Military Academy at West Point will not be deemed to have perverted the designs of its founders, nor will it be thought that the public interest requires that it should be abolished. The National Legislature will still cherish it by a parental and judicious legislation, adapted to render it more perfect, and to increase its capacity and facilities for accomplishing, in their fullest extent, the purposes of its creation.

Resolved, That the committee be discharged from the further consideration of this subject.

THE END.

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